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Lines of Flight: Gilles Deleuze and the Becoming of World Literature

By

Andrew Stones

A thesis Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy in English and Comparative Literary Studies

Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies, University of Warwick

April 2018

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Acknowledgements

Very special thanks to my partner Chloë Nelson and my family for all their support.

All my gratitude and appreciation to my supervisor, Michael Gardiner. Many thanks to all my colleagues at Warwick for their help and advice, especially Neil Lazarus, Daniel Katz and Graeme Macdonald, as well as to my friends and colleagues overseas for their input and guidance.

Declaration

I declare that the work included in this thesis is my own. Elements of my third chapter were included in a conference paper at the 9th International Deleuze Conference, Roma Tre University, Rome 2016. I declare that this thesis has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

Abstract

This thesis stages an encounter between theories of World Literature and the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze, using the concept of the line of flight as philosophical motif and methodological refrain. Initially, this will take the form of a critique of representational and metaphorical modes of reading in the work of two prominent world-literary theorists, Franco Moretti and Pascale Casanova. In contrast, the second chapter develops a materialist semiotics of world literature referred to as a geoliterature, utilising the concepts developed by Deleuze in collaboration with Félix Guattari and with special focus on Francophone Algerian literature as its practical elaboration. The third chapter extends this theorisation to present an alternative philosophy of postcolonial difference to dialectical models, reading Deleuze's early work on Henri Bergson and his critique of Hegelian dialectics alongside the fiction of Zimbabwean novelist Dambudzo Marechera. The fourth chapter argues that this postcolonial Bergsonism makes Deleuze's philosophy of time, as presented in *Difference and Repetition*, already a postcolonial alternative to theories of the subject belonging to European modernity. This argument is made by reading Deleuze's 'three syntheses of time' through three contemporary world-literary works by J.M. Coetzee, Amitav Ghosh and Alexis Wright respectively. In each chapter the line of flight returns as a conceptual motif (whether as the scream in Assia Djebar's work, the rejection of recognition in Dambudzo Marechera's *Black Sunlight*, or the disjunctive synthesis of the future embodied by Alexis Wright's *The Swan Book*). The Coda draws these readings together, arguing for a speculative cartography which thinks the becoming of world literature via the aesthetic figure of the line of flight and an ethics of fabulation rather than representation, taking the study of world-literary theory beyond the paradigms of nationalism and globalism which have thus far structured its theoretical development in the field.

Introduction: "Capitalism is Profoundly Illiterate"¹

"Like Deleuze. I believe in the world and want to be in it. I want to be in it all the way to the end of it because I believe in another world in the world and I want to be in *that*".²

The world is not what it used to be. In fact, as soon as the world became an object for the human sciences towards the end of the twentieth century (via the economic and social effects of globalisation) its end was also on the horizon via global warming and ecological disaster. As Foucault understood, that which is visible and sayable (an episteme) only begins to be knowable as it is in the process of mutating into something else. In the humanities and literary studies in particular, the effects of globalisation were inscribed at an institutional level via the formation of a new theoretical paradigm: World Literature.³ But already this formation is beginning to seem untenable. The world of world literary theory, articulated best by the endless plasticity and adaptability of the novel form in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, no longer seems to offer us much purchase on a global capitalism which has long preferred the instantaneous communication and digital coding of financial transactions over the messy and comparatively slow antics of the written word. "Capitalism is Profoundly Illiterate" argued Deleuze and Guattari, as far back as 1972.⁴

By positing the world of capital as its objective reality, theories of World Literature have tended to affirm rather than critique the conditions in which literature is produced. The novel, the poem or the book itself are secondary to the reality making codes and forces of the economy. An unbridgeable gap exists between the world and the literary. Despite trying to return literary studies to a

¹ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane, (London: Continuum 2004; Paris: Les Éditions De Minuit 1972), p.260.

² Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study*, (New York: Minor Compositions 2013), p.118. Original emphasis.

³ Although use the term extends as far back as Goethe, I refer here to its re-inscription as a specific paradigm for thinking about the effects of globalisation on literary studies.

⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* p.260.

more materialistic and scientific praxis against the discursive excesses of new criticism, structuralism or deconstruction, World Literature as it is theorised by Franco Moretti, Pascale Casanova, David Damrosch and others is fundamentally *anti-materialistic* in its consideration of the book *as* matter. The matter of the book is significant only insofar as its content can be mined for clues leading to the machinations of capital pulling the strings. If we accept the premise that the literary space is determined by political economy (as Moretti, Casanova and Damrosch all do at various points) then reading them will only reveal that determining logic at work. In fact, it is the *matter* of reading that matters. Reading (whether close or distant) is never simply a discursive or symbolic event. By dispensing with the body of the text in favour of data-analytic models Moretti, for instance, reinforces the idea that the book-as-object, the text that I hold in my hand or see on the screen, does not matter. There still remains in world literary theory a hard binary between the former and the latter term that more recent theorists have attempted to elide via a hyphen (World-Literature) that would aim to jump the void between text and world that Moretti's work originally enacted.⁵

Here I distance myself from those theories of World Literature (and World-Literature) carried out first by Casanova and Moretti at the turn of the 21st century and renewed recently by the Warwick Research Collective (WReC), which describe themselves as materialist but only in specific senses. These materialisms might be classified thus: in Casanova it takes the form of Bourdieuan sociology, in Moretti the anti-dialectical strain of Italian Marxism pursued by Galvano Della Volpe and Lucio Coletti, and in the Warwick Research Collective by a commitment to the theory of combined and uneven development put forth by Trotsky.⁶ My aim is not to suggest these paradigms are wrong, or to return to a strictly a-historical formalism, but to put forward a *different* tradition of philosophical materialism which includes Lucretius, Spinoza, Marx, Bergson and Deleuze and which has thus far been overlooked when it comes to the philosophy of literature, in spite of its

⁵ Warwick Research Collective, *Combined and Uneven Development: Towards a New Theory of World Literature*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press 2016).

⁶ Both Moretti and the WReC are of course indebted to the Marxist analyses of Lukács, Gramsci and Jameson as well.

having significant influence over the field of contemporary continental philosophy. This “minor” materialism which includes Marx but does not originate in him, takes the reality of material processes seriously, instead of relegating them in favour of questions over discursive or symbolic representation associated with the so-called linguistic turn, but neither does it reduce the matter of the text to its historical conditioning in a certain mode of production; the interpretation of which is the horizon of all reading.⁷

This argument, that we need to pay attention to the “stuff” of the world independently of what that stuff means *for us*, is where Deleuze’s philosophy has had the most impact in the humanities and social sciences in ushering in a wave of renewed materialist thought since the late 1980s and early 1990s. I include in this return to materialism the work of Rosi Braidotti, Claire Colebrook, Camilla Griggers and Bruno Latour. This new materialism is also a *feminist* materialism in calling for a “situated” political philosophy, which attends to the material and corporeal processes by which certain bodies, communities or groups are caught up in modes of subjection and are not simply subject to discursive or symbolic exclusion from some ontologically prior real.⁸ In postcolonial studies, for instance, the work of Reda Bensmaïa, Lorna Burns and Simone Bignall constitute a minor Deleuzian line which belongs neither to the Derridean-dominated field of discourse analysts such as Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha, but neither to the neo-Marxist “second wave” of postcolonial theory represented by Neil Lazarus and Benita Parry. Whether in Francophone-African literatures (Bensmaïa), the Caribbean (Burns) or Australia (Bignall) the influence of Deleuze on postcolonial studies is at once situated and

⁷ For instance, the WReC’s favoured term when it comes to describing what literature actually *does* is “register”—which to me implies an understanding of the text as a recording surface for the forces of social and historical systems, rather than considering the text as certain *kind* of material itself, in relation to other material and discursive flows. See *Combined and Uneven Development: Toward a New Theory of World Literature*, p.16. The Gramscian overtones of this configuration I contrast to the “geoliterature” I pursue in Chapter 2.

⁸ Rosi Braidotti: “Feminists have been openly critical of the universalistic orientation of most political theory, Marxism included. We stress instead the need for a change of scale, to unveil power relations where they are most effective and invisible: in the specific locations of one’s own carnal, psychic and social existence, in our immanent intellectual and social practices. One has to start from micro-instances of embodied and embedded self and the complex web of social relations which compose the self. A situated practice.” Rosi Braidotti, *Punk Women and Riot Grrls* (2015) <<http://www.performancephilosophy.org/journal/article/view/32/63>> [Accessed 20 January 2018].

specific to local conditions without subjecting those situations to singular or totalising symbolic structures of cultural difference in abstraction. This mobile or tactical thinking-in-movement which Deleuze demands of his readers, Bensmaïa has described as akin to becoming “a stalker in philosophy” in the manner of Tarkovsky’s cinematic style.⁹

In the following work I will show how Deleuze’s philosophy offers us a rich and productive way of thinking not just about the materiality of texts, but how writing and reading (in the broadest sense of practices of inscription on surfaces and the interactions those inscriptions partake in as part of a social field) can in fact go beyond their material manifestation as inscriptions and produce transformations, passages and becomings in the world. This is why I have taken Deleuze’s concept of the line of flight as a conceptual refrain and philosophical motif throughout, for the way it allows us to think of the literary as a *worldly* encounter that produces passages of escape, lines of deterritorialisation, from the reality of things (the “subjectivity and objectivity of what happens”).¹⁰

The line of flight occurs in several of Deleuze’s texts written both under his own name and in collaboration, but always seems to mark a threshold moment in his arguments, wherein it assumes a piloting role in taking Deleuze’s thought away from its predetermined path and into new territories and new encounters with those beings outside of philosophy: artists, paintings, writers, texts, films, schizophrenics, political activists, anti-psychiatrists and many others. In an untranslated text written anonymously for the *Groupe d’Information Sur Les Prisons*, for instance, we find the clearest exposition of the concept of the line of flight in Deleuze’s corpus—where Deleuze’s thought happens precisely in the encounter with the political aftermath of the death of the activist, prisoner and Black Panther George Jackson:

Il y a quelque chose en nous qui nous fait croire souvent que les interventions du pouvoir, si elles ne sont pas justes, sont du moins

⁹ Reda Bensmaïa, “Preface: Gilles Deleuze and How to Become a ‘Stalker’ in Philosophy”, in *Gilles Deleuze, Postcolonial Theory and the Philosophy of Limit*, (London: Bloomsbury 2017), pp.x-xiv.

¹⁰ Gilles Deleuze, “Immanence: A Life”, in *Pure Immanence: Essays on A Life*, trans. Anne Boyman (New York: Zone Books 2001), p.28.

diaboliques et bien calculées. Ce n'est pas vrai; tout échappe au pouvoir, à commencer par ce qu'il fait, ce qu'il conspire et ne domine pas. L'assassinat de Jackson est de ces choses, une ligne de fuite, comme dirait Jackson, où les révolutionnaires s'engagent.

[There is something in us which often makes us believe that interventions of power, if they are not just, are at least evil and well calculated. This is not true; everything escapes power, starting with what it conspires to do and does not dominate. Jackson's assassination is of these things, a line of flight, as Jackson would say, where the revolutionaries engage.]¹¹

The line of flight is not the antithesis of power but that which is always in a process of leaking from within its matrices; that which, in the course of power's paranoia, is produced as a surplus value or threshold of escape. New techniques of surveillance, new workings of capital and new dimensions of control produce their own lines of flight, their own modes of resistance that are forged in the very workings of power. "As individuals and groups we are made of lines", Deleuze and Parnet will argue, "lines that are very diverse in nature".¹² For Deleuze, society is defined by its lines rather than its bodies, institutions or structures (which are themselves traversed by lines). There are segmentary lines, which divide, striate and organise us into distinct categories:

Each time, from one segment to another, we are told, "Now you are no longer a child"; then at school, "Now you are no longer at home", then in the army, "This isn't school anymore..." In short, all kinds of well-defined segments, going in every direction, which carve us up in every sense, these bundles of segmented lines.¹³

But at the same time, there are lines which traverse and splinter off from their rigid segments, lines which are:

¹¹ Groupe d'Information Sur Les Prisons "Après les Assassinastion", in *Intolérable* ed. Phillipe Artières, (Paris: Editions Gallimard 2013 [1971]), p.209. My translation.

¹² Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, "Politics" in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *On The Line*, trans. John Johnston, (New York: Semiotext(e) 1983), p.69.

¹³ Ibid.

[...] much more supple, that are somehow molecular. Not that they are more intimate are personal, for they traverse groups and societies as well as individuals. They trace out small modifications, cause detours, suggest “highs” or periods of depression; yet they are just as well defined, and even govern many irreversible processes. Rather than being segmented molar lines, these are molecular flows (*flux*) with thresholds or quanta. *A threshold is crossed that doesn’t necessarily coincide with a segment of more visible lines.* Many things happen along this second type of line—becomings, micro-becomings—that don’t have the same rhythm as our history.¹⁴

Lines are immanent to the social field, which is to say they *compose* the social field as the imminent milieu through which power conducts its paranoid segmentary divisions. Yet, at the same time, “there is always something that flows or flees, that escapes the binary organizations, the resonance apparatus, and the overcoding machine”.¹⁵ The line of flight is always “on the run”, leading sometimes to a revolutionary new configuration, recording or reterritorialisation (the Black Panther Party) or sometimes to a deterritorialisation or flight which is more absolute, which draws a plane of consistency across all the segmentary and rigid lines as well as their molecular variations: deterritorialisation is absolute when it conforms to the first case and brings about the creation of a new earth, in other words, when it connects lines of flight, raises them to the power of an abstract vital line, or draws a plane of consistency.¹⁶ Sometimes the flights are blocked, the escape plan aborted, and the line of flight becomes instead a line of abolition or death; “the line of flight blasts the two [supple and rigid] segmentary series apart; but it is capable of the worst, of bouncing off the wall, falling into a black hole, [...] and in its vagaries reconstructing the most rigid of segments”.¹⁷

What would a literary history look like from the perspective of the line of flight? Grant Hamilton speaks of world literature as the *leakage* of national literatures; of texts which break out of their circulation within a national context

¹⁴ Ibid. Original emphasis.

¹⁵ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, (London: Continuum 2004; Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit 1980), p.238.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

and take up a more global or international audience.¹⁸ But this is not quite right, for the line of flight is indeed a “leaking” but from *within* the national space as well as without: it is always “in the middle”, neither national or global but carving out its own trajectory from within those cartographies. It is speculative not descriptive.¹⁹ Though they exist within societies (or sometimes at their legislative bind spots or unofficial zones of control) prisons, schools, hospitals and universities are made of borders no less than the geographic borders between countries. Hamilton assumes there *was* something called “national literature” in the first place, but the line of flight tells us that identities are always a threshold, a becoming-otherwise, always fleeing what they are. “Kafkaesque” is not a German, nor Czech, nor Jewish, nor global author-function, but something entirely stranger: a *minor* literature that builds an elaborate architecture in order to escape the segmentary lines by which we might try capture it in the form of meaning, representation or allegory. In Deleuze and Parnet’s survey of the Anglo-American novel, what is revealed is not a voyage—a journey between points—but a flight which can happen even “on the spot”; a becoming which maps its own relations, its own molecular variations, its own lines and transformations and which does not trace what it already knows: an exo-geography. Sure, there is always the risk of returning to the nation, to “our” history, to Oedipus (“what is it which tells us that, on a line of flight, we will not rediscover everything we were fleeing?”) but nonetheless, to write is always to take up a line of flight, without knowing its trajectory: “to write is to trace lines of flight which are not imaginary, and which one is indeed forced to follow. Because in reality writing involves us there. To write is to become, but has nothing to do with becoming a writer”.²⁰

The following work, therefore, is not a representation or a tracing of Deleuze’s own becoming, but an encounter which requires its own constellation, its own cartography, in order to follow the lines of flight I have sought in world

¹⁸ Grant Hamilton, “On World Literature: When Goethe Met Boltzmann”, *Textual Practice*, 28.6 (2014), 1015-1033.

¹⁹ For more on the notion of ‘speculative cartography’ as alternative research methodology to world literature, see my conclusion.

²⁰ Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, “On the Superiority of the Anglo-American Novel”, in *Dialogues II* trans. Hugh Tomlinson, Barbara Haberjam and Elliot Ross Albert, (London: Continuum 2002; Paris: Flammarion 1977), pp.38-43.

literature. The primary concepts I draw from Deleuze (“geoliterature”, “unbecoming”, “the caesura” and others) may or may not appear in Deleuze’s work themselves, but nonetheless repeat the creative force of Deleuze’s thought in new directions. This is the only possible interpretation of an oeuvre that systematically resists systemisation. Deleuze constantly reinvented his vocabulary so as to emphasise the specificity and difference of his various encounters with art and artists (Bacon is not Kafka, Proust is not Ozu) so as to avoid reducing his concepts to a set of ready-mades: a guerrilla metaphysics. There are several works which reconstruct Deleuze’s literary philosophy (rather than his “philosophy of literature”) by showing the historical progression and continuity of his thinking with respect to difference. These are often productive and instructive, but they can also run counter to Deleuze’s ontological, ethical and aesthetic rejection of representation, whereby we can reduce and summarise the labour performed by concepts such as the critical and clinical, the apprenticeship in signs, masochism, minor literature, visions and auditions, to a set of identities to be applied in different situations. A concept is always a constellation. This thesis is not an interpretation or an exegesis but an attempt to think Deleuze’s philosophy via an encounter with various world literary texts which follows its own lines of flight, its own passages and transformations. From repetition: difference.

My reading of Deleuze instead takes the form of a zig-zag line: beginning with an investigation of the *Capitalisation and Schizophrenia* project (in which I include the “missing plateau” of *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* in between the first and second volumes) in light of the scholarship on world literary theory. Then in chapter 2 I move on to a more focused reconstruction of the ‘Postulates of Linguistics’ from *A Thousand Plateaus* in the service of thinking a properly materialist geoliterature. In chapter 3 I go back to Deleuze’s early concepts of difference and multiplicity in *Bergsonism*, his break from the dominant form of Hegelian dialectics practiced French philosophy at the time, for the ways this might inform a postcolonial politics beyond that of centre, periphery and notions of hybridity. Finally, my argument culminates in a reading of the three syntheses of time in *Difference and Repetition*, alongside three contemporary works of world literature, where the spatial politics of geoliterature now gives way to a fully

temporal politics of a dissolved, mobile, and nomadic form of subjectivity that opens the possibility of multiple and differential worlds within “the” world.

I do not intend to argue that Deleuze’s philosophy can be thought of in terms of its relevance and application to postcolonial problematics, therefore, but that Deleuze’s philosophy is, virtually if not actually, *already* a postcolonial one in its response to and overturning of the Kantian subject of modernity and its Others.²¹

Deleuze does not write a philosophy “of” literature but rather a literary-philosophy that thinks in proximity to the lines of flight literature and aberrant movements literature undertakes. This is why Jean-Luc Nancy describes Deleuze’s philosophy as “[a] philosophy of passage, and not of ground or of territory. The passage: a displacement and an assembling, fleeting or prolonged, but always perfect, completed, which does not mean fulfilled.”²² Whilst several have noted this fact, few works on/with Deleuze take it to its radical conclusions: Deleuze’s oeuvre is composed almost entirely in indirect discourse.²³ Speaking of “Deleuzian philosophy” or “Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy”, or even (as some have attempted) to isolate a self-sufficient Deleuzian corpus independent of his collaborators and interlocutors, is the most profound betrayal—a failure to think multiplicity. Even when writing under his own name, “Deleuze” is an encounter, a becoming, that follows lines and passages laid out by his fellow travellers (Guattari, Claire Parnet, Foucault, Antonio Negri, Carmelo Bene, as well as Proust, Sacher-Masoch, Kafka, Joyce, Beckett, Lawrence, Melville and innumerable others). “Since each of us was several, there was already quite a crowd”.²⁴

Reading works of world literature with Deleuze is to open oneself to the encounter, to be taken up by a line of flight, to abandon the narratives of the self

²¹ Toni Morrison has argued, for instance, that in their exposure to dislocation, alienation and subjective fragmentation, slaves were the first true ‘moderns’. See Toni Morrison qtd. in Paul Gilroy, “Living Memory: A Meeting with Toni Morrison”, in *Small Acts: Thoughts on the Politics of Black Cultures*, (London: Serpent’s Tale 1993), p.177.

²² Jean-Luc Nancy, “The Deleuzian Fold of Thought”, in *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, ed. Paul Patton, (London: Blackwell 1996), p.112.

²³ See Joe Hughes, *Difference and Repetition: A Reader’s Guide*, (London: Continuum 2009), for one of the only commentaries on Deleuze that acknowledges his use of indirect discourse throughout his monographs on other philosophers.

²⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.3.

and the other, to find an escape route which no longer passes through an author function but is instead an imminent cartography. What Deleuze, after Henri Bergson, calls “fabulation”, or that mode of storytelling which is speculative, which gathers together the various bodies, territories, social machines, institutions it encounters and in doing so dissolves their historical specificity, their location and determination by power and instead partakes in *fictioning the real* as nothing less than the destruction of the world in the service of the worldly: where the lines of flight meet an Earth and a people as yet inexistent (“yet to come”) but whose apparition we might seek in the cracks along the segmentary lines of persons, nations, institutions, prisons, identities and disciplines.²⁵

²⁵ Deleuze: “We ought to take up Bergson’s notion of fabulation and give it political meaning”. Gilles Deleuze and Antoni Negri “Control and Becoming”, in Deleuze, *Negotiations 1972-1990*, p.174

1. Reading World Literature with Deleuze

1.1. Maps, trees and metaphors

Now, trees and waves are both metaphors – but except for this, they have nothing in common. The tree describes the passage from unity to diversity: one tree with many branches: from Indo-European, to dozens of different languages [...] Trees are what nation-states cling to; waves are what markets do.¹

It is odd how the tree has dominated Western reality and all of Western thought from botony to biology and anatomy, but also gnosiology, theology, ontology, all of philosophy ...: the root foundation, *grund*, *racine*, *fondement*.²

The tree as metaphor, as model, or as image of thought itself? How is it that this same idea comes to preoccupy the speculative theorization of a world-literary system at the turn of the twenty-first century, as continually reoccurs in the thought of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari almost three decades earlier? This repetition, or reoccurrence, of the arborescent as a conceptual figure has seemingly thus far gone unnoticed. Perhaps this is due not so much to the calcification of disciplinary barriers in the years since Moretti's first conjectures on the world-literary system, but speaks rather to a deeper indifference between world-literary studies and poststructuralist philosophy: "In a hundred odd pages [*Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*] contains a truly impressive amount of nonsense".³ Despite Moretti's flippancy towards Deleuze and Guattari here, I will argue that this indifference actually plays itself out at the level of praxis, of concepts and

¹ Franco Moretti, "Conjectures on World Literature", in *Distant Reading*, (London: Verso 2013), p.60.

² Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi, (London: Continuum 2004; Paris: Les Editions de Minuit 1980), p.20.

³ Franco Moretti, *Modern Epic: The World System from Goethe to Marquez*, (London: Verso 1996), p.199. Moretti is apparently unaware that Deleuze wrote a whole book on the subject of nonsense, *The Logic of Sense*, which is actually much longer.

methodologies, rather than on any superficial or surface level. By exposing world-systems theory and its aftershocks in literary studies over the last decade to Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy, I will attempt to identify a political and conceptual blind spot within world literary theory as practiced by two of its prominent early figures—Franco Moretti and Pascale Casanova—when it comes to thinking the relation between language and power, subjectivity and literary forms, and the immanence of text and world. In place of the representational thinking of models and metaphors, where the text becomes only a simulacrum or bad copy of a more ontologically rich reality, I wish to substitute an immanent cartography of lines and transformations where the text is already worldly (it partakes in the becoming of the world) and does not need to have the concept of worldliness added to it as a theoretical supplement.

In the first instance the problem concerns the ontology of the model itself. As a metaphor, the image of the tree is useful for Moretti across a number of different fields - evolutionary biology, macroeconomic history, Marxist critical theory:

Evolutionary trees constitute *morphological* diagrams, where history is systematically correlated with form [...] From a single common origin to an immense variety of solutions: it is this incessant growing apart of life that the branches of the morphological tree capture with such intuitive force [...] a tree is a way of sketching *how far* a certain language has moved from another one, or from their common point of origin.⁴

The logic of this metaphor derives from its capacity to bring aspects of actually existing states of affairs (the history of literature, the history of species, the history of language) into alignment as discrete fields whose objects of knowledge relate to each other in similar ways. That is to say, the metaphor *works* – it systematically correlates the movement of multiple histories into qualitative synthesis as specific examples within a totalizing system. The metaphor aims to make thought identical

⁴ Franco Moretti, *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary History*, (London: Verso 2007), p.70.

with actual states of affairs. The positivism of Moretti's early methodology here would seem to support his own description of his experiments as "scientific work" rather than either strictly or quasi-philosophical work as in the case of previous critical methodologies (e.g deconstruction).⁵ The abstract models which occupy Moretti both in *Conjectures* and *Graphs, Maps, Trees* work by making the global movement of literary forms available to vision in the form of a totalizing logic: "Wallerstein's tripartition of core, periphery and semi-periphery appealed to me because it explained certain empirical findings I had slowly gathered".⁶ In this case the metaphor of the tree has a double function in Moretti's early work on world literary theory not only as an image of literary production on a planetary scale, but as an image of his own critical praxis.⁷

This distinction between the activity of science and the activity of philosophy qua philosophy is, I will argue, the reason for Moretti's indifference to Deleuze and Guattari's work on Kafka in the 1970s despite the overlap in much of their intellectual material (systems theory, evolutionary biology, complexity theory). The metaphor of the tree slides for Moretti between the evolution of natural forms (in the case of the Darwinian tree) and of the evolution of language. Both, it would seem, work by a logic of bifurcation:

From a single common origin to an immense variety of solutions: it is this incessant growing-apart of life forms that the branches of a morphological tree capture with such intuitive force [...] a tree is a way of sketching *how far* a certain language has moved from another one, or from their common point of origin.⁸

⁵ Moretti, "Conjectures on World Literature", p.45.

⁶ Ibid. p.45.

⁷ Moretti's work is certainly not reliant on the image of the tree, nor is it reducible to it. My contention lies more with how the relationship between the evolutionary model of the tree and Moretti's method of distant reading, the process of modelisation itself, can be read axiomatically for Moretti's overall literary sociology. That is, the ontology of the model common to Darwin's tree and Moretti's theory of the world-system interests me for the way in which it is able to turn the Earth into an object of knowledge. Moretti's own use of trees as models for literary and cultural analysis extends beyond the evolutionary tree, but the ontology of modelisation and representation remains fairly consistent.

⁸ Moretti, *Graphs, Maps, Trees*, p.70.

In the language of Deleuze and Guattari, the tree functions as a “plane of reference” composed of “a system of coordinates [in which] the bifurcations, slowing-downs, and accelerations produce holes, breaks and ruptures that refer back to other variables, other relations, and other references”.⁹ Science, for Deleuze and Guattari, operates by an axiomatic logic that responds to instances of rupture or chaos by introducing new “functives” (models, ideas, images) to a plane of reference.¹⁰ From within this plane the problematic behaviour of matter can be brought into relation with previous objects of scientific knowledge as a particular instance of differentiation within a transcendent conceptual synthesis. Here we have an image of thought which corresponds to the image of the tree as a system consisting of extensive differences from a unifying logic. Moretti’s emphasis on models, tracings and visualisations can therefore be understood as scientific activity even in Deleuze and Guattari’s esoteric terminology. Citing Max Weber, Moretti shares much of his conceptual vocabulary in *Conjectures* with Deleuze and Guattari in *What is Philosophy?* In describing the modes of scientific activity: “It is not the ‘actual’ interconnection of ‘things’, Max Weber wrote, ‘but the *conceptual* interconnection of *problems* which defines the scope of the various sciences. A new ‘science’ emerges where a new problem is pursued by a new method”.¹¹ This theoretical movement, from stable notions of identity to degrees of difference from a norm, is precisely the principle which Deleuze and Guattari attack throughout their work not as incorrect per se, but as the dominant image of thought for historical capitalist societies and from which their philosophy marks a point of escape. Furthermore, this indifference – the fundamental disagreement between what it is Moretti and Deleuze and Guattari believe they are doing – will inform my explication of Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of minor literature and its qualitative difference from contemporary approaches to world literary theory, as well as how the two may be combined in creative and unforeseen ways.

⁹ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, Trans. Graham Burchill and Hugh Tomlinson, (London: Verso 1994; Paris: Les Editions de Minuit 1991), p.120, p.124.

¹⁰ Ibid. p.127.

¹¹ Moretti, “Conjectures”, p.46.

Moretti's morphological tracing gives us the extensive difference of languages from one another, but not the qualitative differences within languages themselves and from which, for Deleuze and Guattari, literature draws its political content. If the evolutionary tree in Moretti's hands expresses the spatio-temporal difference of language, this difference *between* languages rather than within them also implies the presence of a linguistic "genetic material" which is universal to all languages and through which each individual language can theoretically be traced back to its common ancestor. I posit that this "genetic material" correlates to theories of universal grammar in scientific linguistics developed by Noam Chomsky among others. This view of language, however, is grounded in a conceptual process which moves from origins and identity to differentiation and individuation. That is to say, Moretti's evolutionary-linguistic schema is a theory of *logos*. In other words, a conceptual privileging of identity over difference - or what Deleuze refers to as "the dogmatic image of thought".¹²

In *A Thousand Plateaus* this dogmatic image is associated in linguistics with Chomsky—who comes under attack in the fourth plateau Postulates of Linguistics: "Chomsky's abstract machine retains an arborescent model and a linear ordering of linguistic elements [...] It is what allows linguistics to claim a basis in pure scientificity, to be nothing but science".¹³ This commitment to *logos* allows scientific linguistics to render individual cases of language-use (in the form of dialect or syntax) as so many instances of variation or difference derived from a transcendental grammar of identities:

Chomsky asks only that one carve from this aggregate a homogenous or standard system as a basis for abstraction or idealization, making possible a scientific study of *principles*. Limiting oneself to standard English is thus not the issue, for even a linguist who studies Black English or the English of the

¹² Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton, (London: Continuum 2004; Paris: Presse Universitaires de France 1968), p.185.

¹³ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp.101-2.

ghettos is obliged to extract a standard system guaranteeing the constancy and homogeneity of the object under study.¹⁴

The tendency to extract categories of grammatical identity from the heterogeneity of language as it exists in the world is precisely what leads linguistics to separate language as a transcendental object of knowledge. The specificity and singularity of linguistic difference is downplayed. The dogmatic or representational image of thought transforms the figure of the tree as a metaphor *for* language, into an image of metaphor *itself*—that is to say—metaphor as the form of conceptual representation through which thought is made to correlate to a perceived state of affairs in the world. Instead of being an impartial tool through which empirical inquiry can be furthered, metaphorical structures come to dominate Moretti's conceptual vocabulary to the exclusion of anything else. Interpretation becomes its own dogma.

The problem which theories of World Literature still seek to address, we may remember, is a perceived inability in the theoretical apparatus of comparative approaches to have any purchase on the life-world of capitalism in its period of globalised accumulation. The initial response to this lack was, however, to construct a new science wherein the objective reality of the world pre-exists the “law of literary evolution” which presumably awaits to be discovered.¹⁵ To look at it another way, Moretti's rejection of close reading and the necessary ontological baggage which accompanies its history (dialectical materialism, deconstruction) has only resulted in a covert ontology returning through the back door as the scientific *a priori* on which Moretti's system is built. Deleuze and Guattari's strategy is not simply to reject science as a discipline but rather the folding of ontology entirely *into* scientific enquiry. Linguistics has it that language exists in a more or less stable state from which universals can be extracted, to the extent that the experiments with field recordings and sociolinguistics conducted by William Labov in the 1970s were seen as radical. The debate between Chomsky and Labov which forms the background to Deleuze and Guattari's fourth plateau can be understood in terms of

¹⁴ Ibid. p.103, original emphasis.

¹⁵ Franco Moretti, “Conjectures”, p.152.

a struggle between a transcendental, dogmatic structure and a rhizomatic, heterogeneous milieu of variation and difference. Moretti's theoretical indebtedness to Chomsky, rather than Labov, leads him to repeat this systematic reduction of difference. That is to say, where language and literature are for Moretti similar in respect to their combined and uneven development as world-system, the totalizing logic of representation ignores what it is literature *as* literature actually does – as a specific kind of language-use. Everywhere Moretti's abstract models find traction it is at the expense of a discussion of stylistics, of action, in favour of semiotics and metaphor. Critical distance from the text may be expanded but "reading" remains an essentially *interpretative* ontological praxis.

Here I wish to identify a similarity between Moretti's scientific materialism (which he inherits from the anti-dialectical Italian Marxists Galvano Della Volpe and Lucio Coletti) and the forms of scientific Marxism practiced by the French Communist Party during the mid-twentieth century. *A Thousand Plateaus'* emphasis on metaphor and representation as oppressive categories is described by Brian Massumi as an attack on the variations of "State philosophy" which permeate Western metaphysics.¹⁶ The state in this understanding is not merely a socio-economic phenomenon but an ontological framework "grounded in a double identity: of the thinking subject, and of the concepts it creates and to which it lends its own attributes of sameness and constancy" and through which "the subject, its concepts, and the 'external' objects to which the concepts are applied have a shared, internal essence: the self-resemblance at the basis of identity".¹⁷ This description works well as a summation of Moretti's theoretical concerns in both *Conjectures* and *Graphs, Maps, Trees*. By emphasising the scientific and empirical aspects of his research the more problematic questions of ontology can be passed over. In actual fact, when Moretti attempts to move literary studies past its reliance on the nation state for its ideological basis, not only does ontology make a return, but the still even more insidious State *as an ontology* as well.

¹⁶ Brian Massumi, *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari*, (Cambridge, Mass: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press 1992), p.2.

¹⁷ Ibid. p.4.

Here we can begin to sketch a Deleuze-Guattarian critique of world literary theory as a discipline which fails to adequately address the gradual critique and overturning of Platonic philosophies of representation undertaken by post-structuralism in the wake of May 1968, despite claims to the contrary. When Deleuze and Guattari invoke the imperative to “make rhizomes, not roots, never plant! Don’t be one or multiple, be multiplicities!” they contrast the making of a cartography with no centralised territory or point of origin, to the dogmatic work of the tree which subordinates all points in its matrix to the self-identity of logos.¹⁸ Of course Moretti makes both maps and trees, but the implication is that for him they constitute two variations on a general principle of representational criticism. Hence we can repurpose Deleuze and Guattari’s insistence that “binary logic is the spiritual reality of the root-tree. Even a discipline as ‘advanced’ as linguistics retains the root-tree as its fundamental image, and thus remains wedded to classical reflection” and redirect this attack towards world-systems approaches to literature in order to say that: “this system of thought has never reached an understanding of multiplicity”.¹⁹

Is it possible to gesture towards an alternative to world literary theory where “the world” and “the text” do not work according to a logic by which the latter represents the former as a, however mediated, abstraction from the material substance of reality? In such an alternative, the two would exist as manifestations of the same substance in an immanent ontology of desiring-production whose categories are not pre-given. To some extent this would be to go against a tradition of materialist or Marxist criticism which seeks to find the abstract signification of dominant social relations lying sedimented in the formal properties of the text, in favour of an immanent criticism which sees those abstractions as both in the world and as part of the world. By drawing upon Deleuze and Guattari’s anti-linguistic theories in *A Thousand Plateaus* and *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature*, the speculative cartography of texts which results will be contrasted to the more orthodox materialism of Moretti and Casanova’s world-systems theories.

¹⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.27.

¹⁹ Ibid. p.5.

1.2. Language and power

When Moretti states that because “forms are the abstract of social relations: so, formal analysis is in its own modest way an analysis of power” conversely it is power as domination, oppression and resistance which is strangely absent from his evolutionary paradigm of language differentiation in *Graphs, Maps, Trees*.²⁰ There the emphasis is instead on the organicist lexicon of Darwinian theory:

If language evolves by diverging, why not literature too? For Darwin ‘divergence of character’ interacts through history with ‘natural selection and extinction’: as variations grow apart from each other, selection intervenes, allowing only a few to survive.²¹

My description of this process as organic refers to Moretti’s uncritical superimposition of rigid classification of species-isolation according to certain interpretations of Darwin, onto the phenomenon of language itself. The development of linguistic norms is no more organic than the development of state-form is a natural evolution of primitive accumulation. As Manuel DeLanda has pointed out, the forms which evolution takes are not discrete categories:

[The isolation of species] need not result in perfectly impermeable barriers. Many plant species, for example, maintain their ability to exchange genes with other species, so their identity is fuzzy in the long-run. But even the defining boundaries of fully reproductively isolated animals like ourselves may be breached through the use of biotechnology, for example, or through the action of retroviruses, a fact that confirms the contingent nature of the boundaries.²²

But as well as undermining the primacy of the organism in evolutionary theory as a discrete object with an essential nature, these examples also point towards how Moretti’s substitution of species of animals for species of languages in *Graphs*,

²⁰ Moretti, “Conjectures”, p.59.

²¹ Moretti, *Graphs, Maps, Trees* p.71-72.

²² Manuel DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity*, (London: Continuum 2006), p.27.

Maps, Trees also relies upon essentialist tendencies in his linguistic sources. This essentialism is the crux of Deleuze and Guattari's antagonism towards scientific linguistics in *A Thousand Plateaus*, but I will now show how this antagonism is still unresolved as regards to world literary theory and why the Chomskyan roots of Moretti's linguistic trees cause the supposed epistemological break of *Conjectures* to misfire.

If for Moretti the models of abstraction which constitute literary texts are political in nature, then the order of abstraction by which this political nature can be derived is mistaken, according to Deleuze and Guattari. In Chomsky's linguistics, they argue, "a constant or invariant is defined less by its permanence and duration than by its function as a centre".²³ These centres effect a system of standardisation where the identity of grammatical logos transcends the instances of variation which structure the actual use of language in the real world. Because of this, aspects of *parole* - speech, style, performance – which literature draws upon were considered irrelevant to the academic field of linguistics as it existed at the time Deleuze and Guattari wrote *A Thousand Plateaus*. The philosophy of language which serves as the material for Moretti's evolutionary models is in actuality disinterested in the activity of literature which it demotes to examples of rhetoric or poetics. If Moretti sees in the Chomskyan linguistic tree a continuity with the role of markets in the literary field rather than a contradiction, this is because a concept of communication and interpretation is common to both. Where in capitalist societies commodities are subject to the signifying regime of exchange, the transcendent sign of value is the principle through which the reality of the market is knowable. Similarly, for Deleuze and Guattari linguistics extracts from language the standardised laws which privilege *langue* (as communication) over *parole* (as the stylistic heterogeneity within language) in order that the integrity of the system not be compromised. When concepts of difference or variation are introduced into the system, it is only as elements in a series rather than units which shift the qualitative dynamic of the linguistic structure: "Brekke, for example, proposes adding an 'idiosyncratic performatory competence' factor tied to a whole constellation of

²³ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.105.

linguistic, psychological, or sociological factors. But what use is this injection of pragmatics if pragmatics is in turn constants or universals of its own?"²⁴ Whilst concepts of force, politics or domination can be introduced into the linguistic tree, they are introduced as local phenomena within a hierarchical grammar of universals. Jean-Jacques Lecerle describes this hierarchy of a structure of standardised variants over a structure which could theoretically be defined by its variation as:

The wrong type of immanence and the wrong level of abstraction: it is based on the separation of language from the rest of the phenomena (let us call it 'the world' for short) and the separation within language of the relevant and irrelevant phenomena, thus using a 'postulate of immanence' to construct an *internal* linguistics, and in doing so leaving out a remainder that only literature is able to capture.²⁵

Where Chomsky's linguistic tree transcends the internal difference of language use, the micro-politics of utterance and speech and the intensive rather than extensive heterogeneity of languages, Deleuze and Guattari posit an anti-linguistics in which language is political *all the way down*. This new pragmatics or anti-linguistics, conceived of as a theory of action *not* representation, is palpable for them in the work of William Labov who "when he brings to light lines of *inherent variation*, he does not simply see them as "free variants" pertaining to pronunciation, style, or non-pertinent features that lie outside the system and leave the homogeneity of the system intact".²⁶ Linguistic pragmatism - in pertaining to the multiple and heterogeneous functions of language in the real world - would be organised for Deleuze and Guattari according to the logic of difference rather than *logos* – which strives towards the self-identity of the world with the subject who perceives it. In this way stylistics or pragmatism would escape the structures of representation and meaning inherent in interpretative criticism.

²⁴ Ibid. p.102.

²⁵ Jean-Jacques Lecerle, *Deleuze and Language*, (London: Routledge 2002), p.154.

²⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* p.103.

The role of literature in this anti-systemic structuralism is now a primary rather than secondary concern for linguists, and presents a counter theory to the abstract models of Moretti, where the text is able to represent relations of power in the world only as signifying contractions within the order of the symbolic. Consequently, the “pressure of cultural selection” Moretti sees in practice in early British detective fiction actually disguises the apolitical nature of the Chomskyan linguistics at work in his analysis where the literary field operates according to an idealised version of the market where “readers discover that they don’t like a certain device, and if a story doesn’t include it, they simply don’t read it (and the story becomes extinct)”.²⁷ In this market, competition may be ruthless and survival never guaranteed, but power works only at a certain level of abstraction. The linguistic material from which the concept of “a text” is derived is neutral as regards to power – the language is simply the bearer of devices of plot, narrative and character which it freely communicates to the reader. The ontological unity of the subject is untouched by the encounter with language. From the perspective of the market, subjects are the *a priori* units whose interests political economy aims to mediate. This is why Fredric Jameson defines the activity of the critic in his version of historical materialism in much the same terms as Moretti, as interpretation:

[of priority is] the political interpretation of literary texts. It conceives of the political perspective not as some supplementary method, not as an optional auxiliary to other interpretive methods current today [...] but rather as the absolute horizon of all reading and all interpretation it merely represents this form through signifying practices.²⁸

When the signifying practices in question are precisely phenomena whose interpretation can be radicalised, but where the political content of stylistics is at the macro or molar level of narrative and the mode of enunciation is subjective. In Moretti’s use of Jameson’s socially-symbolic narratives the world of social reproduction has only an abstract relationship to the text which can gesture

²⁷ Ibid. p.72

²⁸ Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as Socially Symbolic Act*, (London: Routledge 1983; repr. 2002), p.1.

towards the political but cannot enter into it. Language as an immaterial substance can never have access to the real, but has to be mediated and interpreted through representation.

In a later essay, “Evolution, World-Systems, *Weltliteratur*” Moretti does retreat from some of the positions regarding literature and evolution in his *Conjectures*, arguing after the fact that “evolution has no equivalent for the idea of social conflict” such that an encounter between historical materialism and the natural sciences is bound to misfire before it gets started:

Competition among organisms, or among similar species, yes, as well as arms races between predators and prey: but nothing like a conflict whose outcome may redefine the entire ecosystem. Nor is this a problem of evolution only; from what I understand complexity and network theory have exactly the same blind spot—which clearly, no theory of culture can allow.²⁹

Moretti clearly doesn’t have in mind Deleuze and Guattari’s utilisation of complexity theory and a certain kind of Marxism (which, I would argue, precisely does attempt to think the role of struggle, dissent and rupture within social systems), but I would argue that their method of interdisciplinarity in which concepts are removed from their original context and placed in new ones, but which therefore *transforms* the concept itself, has some advantages over Moretti’s. As I gesture towards above, this is because Moretti’s particular practice of interdisciplinarity relies upon a logocentric intellectual methodology for which the tree is the model, the *model of the model* as it were. This is not by any means fatal, and my goal is not polemic, but it does serve to explain why there is no cross-over between Moretti and Deleuze-Guattari’s respective projects in spite of their similar materials. When in the same essay, for instance, Moretti acknowledges that Stephen Jay Gould’s evolutionary theory places more emphasis on convergence as well as divergence (“what if the *convergence* of distinct lineages could produce new forms?”) this does not alter the way in which evolution as metaphor might be applied to literary history in itself, whereas for Deleuze and Guattari the existence

²⁹ Franco Moretti, “Evolution, World-Systems, *Weltliteratur*”, in *Distant Reading* p.122.

of convergence (which they take from Bergson's concept of *involution*) demands the radical reversal of the relation between identity and difference itself—the identity of distinct lineages or segmented lines is only the *effect* of a more fundamental continuum of difference which subtends the entire system itself.³⁰ When it comes to their materialist semiotics, it is what makes systemicity itself possible as the differential field or plane of immanence from which individual enunciation is always subtracted.³¹

At this point the philosophical and theoretical gap between Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy and the praxis of world-literary criticism comes into sharp focus. To counterpose the dogmatic servitude to Platonic representation in (mainstream) linguistics, Deleuze and Guattari's immanent-materialist philosophy of language begins from the standpoint of parole as style, in literature and poetics, rather than needing to be retroactively fitted to literary studies as in Moretti's treatment of Chomsky. If Deleuze and Guattari provide us with the materials to construct a counter-geography to world literary theory's reliance on the conceptual apparatus of representation as its ontological underpinning, this is reflected in the hostility with which their work has been received in the field. As a prime example consider Pascale Casanova in an article for the *New Left Review*:

The second constitutive feature of the literary world is its relative autonomy. Issues posed in the political domain cannot be superimposed upon, or confounded with, those of the literary space, whether national or international. Much contemporary literary theory seems bent on creating this short-circuit, constantly reducing the literary to the political. [...]

Deleuze and Guattari's *Kafka*, which claims to deduce from a single diary entry (25 December 1911), not only a particular political stance—thus

³⁰ Ibid. p.129.

³¹ I will expand these arguments in relation to Deleuze and Guattari's materialist semiotics in Chapter 2. The similarity to structuralism here is evident (Deleuze and Guattari's theory is directly derived from Volosinov's), and underlines the disappointment that there is not a more sustained engagement with structuralism in Moretti's oeuvre.

affirming that Kafka is indeed ‘a political author’—but a political vision that informs his entire oeuvre.³²

But it is precisely the autonomy of the literary field which is at issue here and which Casanova takes as given. In Casanova’s republic of letters, politics is indexed to the national allegories of small or peripheral nations; it’s in the centre where the aesthetic earns its relative autonomy from the economic realm (which is to say, *political* economy). As Lorna Burns argues, “Casanova maintains that the singularity of literature is measured by its distance from the political, and she poses a trajectory that moves from an initial relation between literature and politics (in short, national literature bound up with nationalist struggle) to the independence of literature from politics”.³³ Deleuze and Guattari would undoubtedly agree with Casanova that we should resist the reduction of writing to politics, but at the same time insist that the division of labour between centre and periphery (where the periphery desires to author itself as nation in a way which the formal experiments of the modernist centre have freed themselves from) is a false one. As I argue in Chapter 3, this division of labour systemically ignores peripheral or semi-peripheral modernist (or at least non-allegorical) writing at the same time as it ignores the politics of a European modernism which are equally unreducible to the nation. Deleuze and Guattari, on the contrary, want a politics of writing and even language which is *prior* to individual enunciation: a micropolitics of writing or libidinal economy of the text which is already social and hence *worldly*. Throughout *Anti-Oedipus* one can observe a multitude of ways in which writing and the political are immanently embedded in one another. In fact, we will see how the very idea of the autonomous literary sphere or “the republic of letters” could only have been envisioned within a capitalistic framework.

1.3. The libidinal economy of the text

³² Pascale Casanova, “Literature as a World”, *New Left Review*, 31 (2005), pp.71-90 (p.84).

³³ Lorna Burns, “Postcolonial Singularity and a World Literature Yet to Come”, *Angelaki: Journal of The Theoretical Humanities*, 20:4 (2015), p.247

In *How to do Things With Words* (1962) J.L. Austin develops a theory of speech-acts or “performatives” as specific kinds of utterances where language does not simply give meaning to a world of objects and bodies, but where a codification of social space is produced. He defines performative speech as that by which “the uttering of the sentence is, or is a part of, the doing of an action, which again would not normally be described as, or as ‘just’, saying something” but where the sense of the speech overflows or is not limited to the medium of language which gives it a form of expression.³⁴ This sense is not opposed to non-sense but in fact forms part of a larger network of sign-relations which cannot be reduced to the linguistic. Austin gives many examples of these kinds of expressions, several of which are obvious, but notes how “the performance of [the action] is also the object of the utterance, but it is from far from being usually, even if it is ever, the sole thing necessary if the act is deemed to have been performed”.³⁵ Speech acts function by establishing a virtual connection between the utterance and the objects, bodies and territory in which they are uttered. The act of sentencing by a judge relies upon the affective qualities of their dress, their voice, the court building, the jury and a whole series of imperceptible elements in order for its ability to transform the body of the accused into that of the condemned to have authority. In their social constructions then, Austin’s performatives can be said to function much like that of the machine in Deleuze and Guattari’s terminology – as a productive connection between parts and partial objects (sounds, affects, organs). Indeed Deleuze and Guattari borrow much of Austin’s analysis in their development of the concept of a micropolitics immanent to and productive of social space against that of an ideology which determines meaning from above. However, they go further than Austin by rejecting the ontological primacy of speech over writing so central to representational literary criticism.

In opposition to political history seen as a competing field of ideologies and discourses *Anti-Oedipus* is a history of desire from below – that is, a political economy of desire which is immanent to the material rather than imposed on

³⁴ J.L. Austin, *How to do Things With Words*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1962; repr. 1976), p.5.

³⁵ Ibid. p.8

matter from without. In this respect there is no undifferentiated ground from which being or substance can be thought, and it is difference itself which produces from within itself concepts of life. One example of this is in Deleuze and Guattari's discussion of the function of cruelty in so-called primitive or despotic societies. Drawing on Foucault's analysis of the role of torture in sovereign societies, they describe a surplus-value within desiring-production which produces the transcendence of certain bodies:

The primitive territorial machine codes flows, invests organs, and marks bodies. To such a degree that circulating – exchanging – is a secondary activity in comparison with all the others: marking bodies, which are the earth's products. The essence of the recording, inscribing socius, insofar as it lays claim to the productive forces and distributes the agents of production, resides in these operations: tattooing, excising, carving, sacrificing, mutilating, encircling, and initiating.³⁶

The pain inflicted on the body is a sign of subjection to the despot's power but also, as affective spectacle, organises the bodies which make up the tribe through the collective threat of violence. This is identical to Foucault's understanding of how sovereign power is manifested through visual affect:

[Torture] must mark the victim [...] torture does not reconcile; it traces around or, rather, on the body of the condemned man signs that must not be effaced [...] public torture and execution must be spectacular, it must be seen by all almost as its triumph. The very excess of the violence employed is one of the elements of its glory.³⁷

The disequilibrium between the punishment and the crime establishes the body of the sovereign seemingly as the origin of law itself – the visual excess of cruelty which “pursues the body beyond all possible pain” is counterpoised to the finite

³⁶ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane, (London: Continuum 2004; Paris: Les Éditions De Minuit 1972), p.158.

³⁷ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, (London: Penguin 1991; Paris: Editions Gallimard 1975), p.34.

force of the bodies of the crowd and confirms the transcendent position of the despot in relation to the social.³⁸ It is the inscription of bodies themselves, their organs and surfaces, which produces a transcendent law through a surplus of desiring-production – desire’s libidinal economy. Writing cuts into the body in order that the subject be affected. This account of law is micropolitical and anti-humanist in refusing to ground history and culture in a transcendent human essence, but rather explains the formation of the subject through an excess of desire and cruelty which traverses bodies and organisms, forming connections between them and structuring territory:

Cruelty has nothing to do with some ill-defined or natural violence that might be commissioned to explain the history of mankind; cruelty is the movement of culture that is realised in bodies and inscribed on them, belabouring them. That is what cruelty means. This culture is not the movement of ideology: on the contrary, it forcibly injects production into desire, and conversely, it forcibly inserts desire into social production and reproduction.³⁹

It is no longer solely the affective capacity of speech-acts to organise bodies and territories; but the very formation of “a” body itself which is effected through the act of writing. Moreover, the sign of punishment on the body establishes a ‘sense’ which is *not* linguistic in which the social field is affected by the combined yet unequal differentiation of matter prior to its representation in subjects. For Deleuze and Guattari the evolution of signs cannot be reduced to the evolution of language, while difference cannot be understood in terms of a language system which the body is born into – as in structural linguistics:

[Desire] makes men or their organs into the parts and wheels of the social machine. The sign is a position of desire; but the first signs are the territorial signs that plant their flags in bodies. And if one wants to call this inscription in naked flesh “writing” then it must be said that speech in fact presupposes

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p.159.

writing, and that it is this cruel system of inscribed signs that renders man capable of language, and gives him a memory of the spoken word.⁴⁰

Here Deleuze and Guattari's analysis of cruelty in *Anti-Oedipus* forms above all a theory of action, not representation, which dovetails with their rejection of linguistics in *A Thousand Plateaus* in favour of a politicised theory of speech-acts or pragmatics. Bodies, subjects and territories are not represented by writing but instead it is the very praxis of writing, inscribing and encoding which works to sustain these categories. Literature in this sense is not considered a derivative form of speech—but as that by which the subject presupposes her ability to speak *as a* subject.

From this theory of praxis can be derived several reactionary critiques which world-literary studies has directed at Deleuze and Guattari's text on Kafka.

Casanova, for instance, remarks:

Deleuze and Guattari, in rereading [Kafka's entry diary of 25/12/1911] diminish the specifically literary character of literature by applying to it – particularly in connection with the highly ambiguous notion of “minor literature” – a crude and anachronistic interpretation that deforms his meaning.⁴¹

But this criticism in turn misattributes Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the minor as derived *from* Kafka, when their deployment of the term is actually situated within the context of their own ontology and moreover *intended* to deform the dominant reading of Kafka's texts. *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* was written between the publication of the first and second volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* and, I argue, forms a coherent and sustained engagement with the political philosophy articulated in those texts. Whilst the accusation that Deleuze

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, Trans. M.B DeBevoise (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press 2004; Paris: Éditions de Seuil 1999), p.203. David Damrosch repeats this simplification of Deleuze and Guattari's argument when he reduces minor literature simply to literatures written in a minority dialect, in spite of Deleuze and Guattari's clear distinction between the former as process and the latter as identity. See David Damrosch, *What is World Literature?* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press 2003), pp.201-203.

and Guattari wilfully abuse their sources is not new, this is for the most posed as a question of academic standards when in reality it forms a major part of the philosophical project from the beginning.⁴² This is not to say that all interpretations are equally valid (as Casanova would no doubt object) but that at the same time criticism is not the rehearsal of correct and incorrect positions. Deleuze and Guattari's prolonged and detailed encounter with Kafka's texts would function perfectly well without the biographical context of his diary. Indeed, in taking up Casanova's critique of *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature* Stanley Corngold repeats some of the worst mistakes of pre-structuralist literary criticism by considering "Kafka's views as he states them" as the final authority on the textual objects themselves.⁴³

This Oedipalisation of Kafka, which Deleuze and Guattari subvert, now repeats itself in order to transform him into the father of his own texts. The mapping of a politicised socio-linguistics onto a high-modernist aesthetic theory *is* problematic, but Corngold's claim that Deleuze and Guattari held "the mistaken view that Kafka wrote in a dialect called 'Prague-German' simplifies and flattens their concept of the minor as only a synonym *for* dialect".⁴⁴ Rather, as they themselves point out, "a minor literature doesn't come from a minor language", which is to say, the linguistic field is not made up of constants and variables as in the Chomskyan paradigm.⁴⁵ For Deleuze and Guattari variation is primary in language to the extent that the possibility of language is the result of a transformation of the body: "the mouth, tongue and teeth find their primitive territoriality in food. In giving themselves over to the articulation of sounds, the mouth, tongue and teeth deterritorialise".⁴⁶ There is no undifferentiated substance

⁴² Commenting on his background in the history of philosophy, Deleuze describes this work as "a sort of intellectual buggery [...] I saw myself taking an author from behind and giving him a child that would be his, yet monstrous". Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations 1972-1990* trans. Martin Joughin, (New York: Columbia University Press 1995; Paris: Les Editions de Minuit 1990), p.6.

⁴³ Stanley Corngold, "Kafka and the Dialect of Minor Literature" in *Debating World Literature* ed. Christopher Peneagast and Benedict Anderson, (London: Verso 2004), p.276.

⁴⁴ Ibid. p.272.

⁴⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, Trans. Dana Polan, (London: University of Minnesota Press 1986; Paris: Les Editions de Minuit 1975), p.16.

⁴⁶ Ibid. p.19

or grammar that stands behind difference, on the contrary, language differs from itself. As Ronald Bogue has argued in regards to language's internal variation:

Consider the statement "I swear!" for example. Phonemically one may view variations in the pronunciation of "swear" as insignificant deviations from a standard phonemic unit, but Deleuze and Guattari look on all the possible pronunciations of "swear" as forming a continuum of sounds, a line of continuous variation, which has a virtual existence, real without being actual. Each speaker actualises a particular portion of that continuum, and the regular patterns of action of a dominant social order determine which point along the continuum counts as the "correct" pronunciation and which points are "incorrect", "non-standard", "deviant".⁴⁷

Rendered crudely, Deleuze and Guattari's concept of minor literature appears to suggest that all linguistically non-standard texts are always already political. However, this misses the fact that the concepts of the minoritarian and majoritarian are not limited to the field of language – it is not that there are concrete assemblages of bodies and discursive assemblages of sounds which represent the former, but rather that both are immanent to the world and presuppose one another. The concept of the minor does not refer to the condition of a particular language group (to a minority) but instead to the possibility for infinite variation which all languages disavow in the process of their standardisation. In the evolution of language, the development of recognisable forms is a result of the contraction of variation and difference, rather than their origin. The site of this contraction is political only in Deleuze and Guattari's sense of the micropolitical: as the process through which *a* people come to exist and can be represented.

It is this dedication to the conditions under which "the assemblage of a collective enunciation" is possible – through the carving out of a subject and a world from within the world – which makes the theory of minor literature a

⁴⁷ Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze on Literature*, (London: Routledge 2003), p.99.

materialism.⁴⁸ In contrast to which Casanova's speculative republic of letters is, I contend, profoundly anti-materialist in its tendency towards transcendentalism and representation. She states that:

[Deleuze and Guattari] project upon Kafka their view of politics as subversion, or "subversive struggle," whereas for him, in the Prague of the early twentieth century, it was identified solely with the national question. [...] In other words, Kafka was a political author who had no real political interests, who did not care about the burning political questions of his time.⁴⁹

But this could not be further from the truth. In as much as Kafka's personal views can be established (and despite Stanley Corngold's insistence on "the trustworthy authority" of Max Brod, we should remain sceptical) the national question is at the same time a personal one, for it consists not only in the manner in which to represent the Prague-German people but the manner in which a people can be said to exist at all.⁵⁰ There are two orders of the political at work here – the macro or major politics of peoples, subjects and parties, and the molecular or micro-politics of organs, intensities and desiring-production. Deleuze and Guattari's focus on the latter is not to suggest the former doesn't exist but, to borrow a term from second-wave feminism, that *the personal is also the political*. That is to say, subjects and peoples are not the units upon which politics is staged – but rather the existence of subjects and peoples (as in Foucault's analysis of sovereign power) is the result of a politics – an over-coding of surplus desire which produces the appearance of transcendence from within immanence. Politics and subjectivity are bound all the way down. So Kafka's observation that "literature is less a concern of literary history than of the people" does not only refer to the competitive struggle of national or majoritarian literatures as Casanova insists but, in Deleuze and Guattari's hands, to the specific problem which modern works encounter - the existence of a people at all.⁵¹ This is the way in which Deleuze and Guattari consider

⁴⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, p.18.

⁴⁹ Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, p.204.

⁵⁰ Corngold, "The Dialect of Minor Literature", p.273.

⁵¹ Franz Kafka qtd. in Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, p.193.

Kafka's texts (the novels, stories and diaries as a whole) to be prophetic, not in their prediction of the actual bureaucratic forms of Stalinism, Fascism and Capitalism—"as prophet and seer, capable of divining and announcing events to come"—but in their relationship to the concept of "the people" as a specific problem in modernity.⁵²

Against the dominant trend in world-literary studies, we should insist that the concept of "a people" be of as much ontological and historical importance as "the world". Where in Casanova's taxonomy of genres, the *people* appear as the screen upon which politics is projected (the problem for the so-called political author is how best to represent such a people) for Deleuze and Guattari the problem concerns how a people come to be constituted in the first place. Reading *Anti-Oedipus* as a Nietzschean critique of positivism, in *The Political Unconscious* Fredric Jameson corroborates our earlier accusation that the interpretative tendency of world-literary critics is in the first instance reactionary:

It is, for instance, increasingly clear that hermeneutic or interpretative activity has become one of the basic polemic targets of contemporary post-structuralism in France [...] what is denounced is therefore a system of allegorical interpretation in which the data of one narrative line are radically reduced by their rewriting according to the paradigm of another narrative, which is taken as the former's master code or Ur-narrative and produced as the ultimate hidden or unconscious *meaning* of the first one.⁵³

Jameson's text is cited variously by both Casanova and Moretti, each of whom would seem to have forgotten this earlier moment of continental thought which Jameson here articulates as a critique of textual hermeneutics. Rather than any linguistic turn, this moment in continental philosophy (in which I will tentatively include Lyotard's *Libidinal Economy* (1974) as well as *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* and *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*) is wholly disabused of the notion that the world is a text: "The unconscious poses no problem of meaning, solely problems of

⁵² Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, p.204.

⁵³ Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, p.22.

use. The question posed by desire is not “what does it mean?” but rather “How does it work?”.⁵⁴ World-systems analysis as it is presently practiced in world-literary studies, I will argue, operates in the same manner as the Freudian unconscious does for Deleuze and Guattari – always already there, waiting to be discovered, its meanings lying under the surface of our everyday perceptions. This is the truth of Moretti’s empirical observations and Casanova’s Bourdieusian sociology – where the realisation of value in the form of a given text’s representation in the world system is taken as validation of the system itself:

The hierarchical structure that orders the literary world is the direct product of the history of literature in the sense I have described, but it is also what makes this history [...] the events of the literary world take on meaning through the structure that produces them and gives them form and, in so doing, makes literature at once stake, resource, and belief.⁵⁵

Casanova’s world republic works to the degree that it describes a systemic circulation of texts which verifiably exists according to the data:

In the world republic of letters, the richest spaces are also the oldest, which is to say the ones that were first to enter into literary competition and whose national classics came also to be regarded as universal classics. The literary map that has taken shape in Europe since the sixteenth century cannot be regarded, then simply as the result of a gradual extension of literary belief or the idea of literature (in keeping with the familiar image of the ‘dissemination’, ‘fortune’, or even ‘influence’ of a literary form or work).⁵⁶

The existence of a “common condition of dependency” which exists along a continuum between centre and periphery and which gives form to the relations between various literatures (where each specific instance is always a *mixed* situation of central, semi-peripheral, and peripheral conditions in a given historical

⁵⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p.119.

⁵⁵ Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, p.82.

⁵⁶ Ibid. pp.82-83.

situation) is not under contention here.⁵⁷ What is under contention is the form and character of these historical structures, which are certainly not just a matter of competition, but also the violent suppression, extermination or outlawing of certain literary ecologies belonging to both core and periphery. The historical existence of literature *as literature*, or the means by which certain forms of inscription and utterance are ascribed literary status against others, is a case of primitive accumulation as well as marketisation. If Max Brod had followed Kafka's wish to have his work destroyed, one might ask if "Kafka" would exist as literature of the world republic at all, being invisible to the system as such. Indeed the most vital aspects of Casanova's theory are those moments where the texts at hand threaten to disappear into the margins of her sociology. This is the case with Kafka and, I will argue in chapter 3, with Dambudzo Marechera. The relationship between literature and the nation is not given, but was rather institutionalised by the British Empire as the cultural logic to the first truly capitalist world-system. As Michael Gardiner has argued: "From the inception of the British state at the end of the seventeenth century, culture has been charged with the ideological task of describing a common ground for the 'nation', understood in terms of ethnicity and empire".⁵⁸ It is precisely *against* the national question as Casanova theorises it (the establishment of economic and political independence, the formalisation of constitutional rights, and so on) through which English Literature as discipline became a "surrogate" constitution for peoples and countries assimilated into an enlarged national community in the form empire but who were denied their rights to self-determination.⁵⁹ This is perhaps unique to the British-imperial world-system as it develops from around the start of the seventeenth century up until the First World War, but underlies the fact that "the construction of national literary space" is not in itself a synecdoche for political or literary freedom as it is for Casanova.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Ibid. p.85.

⁵⁸ Michael Gardiner, *The Constitution of English Literature: The State, the Nation and the Canon*, (London: Bloomsbury 2013), p.2.

⁵⁹ Ibid. p.4. This goes as well for sub-national cultural formations in the UK, where acceptance into English Literature has been conditional on the surrendering of constitutional objection.

⁶⁰ Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, p.85.

Forms of cultural violence, linguistic suppression, or literary domination are often kept under the place-holder of “competition” in Casanova’s work, in which they exist as a kind of archival unconscious.⁶¹ This is certainly the case when it comes to the postcolonial novel, where:

Increasingly it is the case that the literary power of a central nation can be measured in terms of the literary innovations produced by universally recognised writers from its suburbs. For a language no less than the literary tradition associated with it, these outsiders supply a new way of keeping up with modernity and thereby of revaluing the nation’s stock of literary capital. The importance of notions such as ‘Commonwealth literature’ or ‘francophonie’ lies in precisely this, for they make it possible to lay claim to, and then annex, peripheral literary innovations under a central linguistic and cultural aegis.⁶²

The proximity of Casanova’s language to finance here (valuation, stock, literary capital) is not incidental considering, as Gardiner points out, the concurrent rise of English Literature and financial capitalism throughout the Eighteenth century.⁶³ But here the world-system stands in for what used to be called imperialism, where the laws governing literary value are sustained and reproduced by colonial structures of inequality and independence. The ambiguity here is the extent to which Casanova’s sociology *relies* upon those colonial structures of patronisation, recognition and assimilation rather than critiques them. Is it possible, for instance, to include those forms of literary solidarity and exchange which are not mediated by the capitalist world-system in a world republic of letters? The importance of transgressive reading practices by those engaged in anti-imperial struggle (where the circulation of Marx’s texts throughout the Southern hemisphere, for example, serves as a counterpoint to market-based analysis) is largely absent in *The World Republic of Letters*.⁶⁴ My present concern is not simply to state the value of some previously

⁶¹ Ibid. p.85.

⁶² Ibid. p.120.

⁶³ See Michael Gardiner, *The Constitution of English Literature* pp.2-3.

⁶⁴ This is a difference between Casanova’s and WREC’s world-systems, where the latter incorporates periphery-to-periphery relations to a much larger degree.

overlooked or ignored body of texts, but rather to argue that those literary works which are largely invisible to Casanova's world republic, can be thought and studied in a relational and comparative way, but the method and style of systemisation must be changed, in addition to the notion of world which they disclose.⁶⁵

Here the structural similarity between Casanova's literary space and an earlier form of Saussurean linguistics, which we gestured towards previously, lies in the absence of an outside to their relative systems. As Ronald Bogue notes:

In the Saussurean theory of the sign, as many have noted, the signifier effectively dominates the signified: signifier and signified are paired in the vertical relation of the sign, but the relative (or 'value') of the signified is determined by the horizontal relations of difference between signifiers [...] Deleuze and Guattari insist that the structural account of meaning presupposes two complimentary forces – one that creates arbitrary signifiers (i.e. extracts a deterritorialised flux), and one that fixes the signifier-signified bond (i.e. imposes the transcendent law of language).⁶⁶

This transcendent law of language manifests itself in the world republic of letters through value as *the* signifier which fixes all the others – a capitalist axiomatic whereby the law of abstraction is regulated from within (rather than via the body of a despot or sovereign). Casanova mistakenly assumes that the world republic of letters retains its autonomy through a certain antagonism to political representation, when it is in fact its fullest articulation:

The unification of literary space through competition presumes the existence of a common standard for measuring time, an absolute point of reference unconditionally recognised by all contestants. It is at once a point in space, the centre of all centres (which even literary rivals, by the very fact of their competition, are agreed in acknowledging), and a basis for measuring time that is peculiar to literature.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ This alternative, which I have termed geoliterature, will be the subject of chapter 2 and elaborated on chapters 3 and 4 in respect to the postcolonial novel.

⁶⁶ Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze and Guattari*, (London: Routledge 1989), pp.99-100.

⁶⁷ Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters* p.87-88.

The *people* as the citizens of this abstract republic are only such by their assimilation into the regime of transcendence as subjects to be represented. The very praxis of world-literary studies in this instance *requires* the ontological impoverishment of the text, by turning the literary object into a proliferating series of signifiers which require their own interpretation. Equally, actual people only exist as political subjects only in the sense of a rigid division of labour between author-producers and reader-consumers. Against the despotism of the signifier, Deleuze and Guattari's encounters with literature give back to their sources an ontological autonomy which representational criticism strips of them:

How do these machines, these desiring-machines, work – yours and mine? [...] Desire makes its entry with the general collapse of the question 'What does it mean?' No one has been able to pose the problem of language except to the extent that linguists and logicians have first eliminated meaning; and the greatest force of language was only discovered once a work was viewed as a machine, producing certain effects, amenable to a certain use.⁶⁸

As a *pragmatics*, their schizoanalytical reading of Kafka's texts directly influences the conceptual vocabulary of the *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* project. The concept of the desiring-machine flattens the ontological hierarchy of representation until only an immanent field of desiring-production and layered strata remains.

1.4. Schizoanalysis as textual cartography

To speak of a politics of desire which is radically de-personalised and to say "the personal is political" is not a contradiction. Rather, each body is already an assemblage of desiring production – an over-coding of material flows which constitutes in itself a writing on the body. This is the sense in which Deleuze and Guattari conceive of writing as a social practice which acts directly on the material, as a cut in the materials of sensation (affect and percept) which don't belong to any

⁶⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p.119.

particular organism but are in fact that which the concept of organism presupposes. If the primary forms of language in capitalist society are the slogan and order-word which are “not to be believed but obeyed, and to compel obedience” then what interests Deleuze and Guattari in literary works are those instances in which the communicative content of the utterance is overtaken by a de-personalised and a-signifying flow of linguistic matter.⁶⁹ Minor literature aims, in contrast, “to make the sequences vibrate, to open the word onto unexpected internal intensities – in short, an asignifying *intensive utilization* of language”.⁷⁰ In the context of the becoming-animal of Kafka’s texts:

There is no longer a subject of the enunciation, nor a subject of the statement. It is no longer the subject of the statement who is a dog, with the subject of the enunciation remaining ‘like’ a man; it is no longer the subject of enunciation who is ‘like’ a beetle, the subject of the statement remaining a man. Rather, there is a circuit of states that forms a mutual becoming, in the heart of necessarily multiple or collective assemblage.⁷¹

This view of language as an intensive distribution of forces in various states of acceleration and calcification could easily slide into a linguistic idealism, but this would only be the case because the literary sources of the conceptual assemblage of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* and *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* are those where the signifying gap between writing and action is at a minimal degree of separation. In fact the concept of the machine, as a series of cuts in the material rather than a structure which represents matter from without, receives its fullest expression in the literary work. As Ronald Bogue asserts:

The function of machines is to “machine” – to form syntheses, to produce flows through binary connections, inclusive disjunctions and nomadic conjunctions. The problem for Kafka is to create a writing machine that synthesises flows of desiring production, that forms multiple connections,

⁶⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.83. The concept of the slogan or order-word as the primary unit of language will be explored in chapter 2.

⁷⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, p.22.

⁷¹ Ibid.

disjunctions and conjunctions, and thereby produces and sustains movement.⁷²

This materialist investment in writing as a machine for the coding of flows can be intuited in Deleuze and Guattari's break with linguistics in favour of a pragmatics consisting of metamorphosis contrary to metaphor. The opposition here is between structure and machine as two competing ontological schema – the former constantly fixing and co-ordinating everything it encounters according to its own internal organisation and the latter proliferating through a series of heterogeneous connections which change its internal nature – tree and rhizome. The concept of the desiring machine in its linguistic variant is a materialist concept to the extent that it privileges the standpoint of production, but without the deterministic language of base and superstructure which submits language to the order of representation. What the theory of pragmatics gains over structural linguistics, according to Jean-Jacques Lecercle, is "a sense of the importance of language as social practice (the shift from production compels a shift away from individualism and the centrality of the speaker *qua* speaker) [and] an insistence on the concrete workings of language, as opposed to the abstract ideality of the system".⁷³ If a text like *The Trial* is significant for Deleuze and Guattari it is not because of the ways in which it represents, signifies or in other ways stands in for the world, but for the way in which its linguistic materials are already immanent to the historically bureaucratic and institutional forms from which it both derives and to which it intervenes as an abstract machine. Austin reminds us that speech acts do not exist in a vacuum but function in tangent with a whole array of material and immaterial affects which produce non-corporeal changes in the world – the act of sentencing alone does not transform the body of the condemned but requires the presence of the jury, the dress and manner of the judge, the building of the courtroom etc. *The Trial* is constituted by a series of speech-acts which overflow their institutional structures and individual speakers and enter into a machinic assemblage which produces the law as social machine. The law is never located in a single character or

⁷² Bogue, *Deleuze on Literature*, p.74.

⁷³ Lecercle, *Deleuze and Language*, p.184.

location but instead seems to always take place in adjacent rooms, passages and subsidiary chambers to be overheard or experienced only second-hand. In this way the text places its linguistic matter in a dynamic flux. The coding of bodies and territories by speech-acts is constantly overflowing its area of effect such that the geography of the novel is progressively illogical as the law machine is reconfigured in different settings.

Where world-systems analysis has until recently only interpreted the world, for the schizoanalyst, the world is composed of machinic flows: “Everywhere *it* is machines – real ones, not figurative ones: machines driving other machines, machines being driven by other machines, with all the necessary couplings and connections”.⁷⁴ In the speculative cartography of literary lines of flight I will go on to construct, the world is not a text to be interpreted (as it is for both deconstruction and world-systems analysis) but is rather understood through the immanent desiring-production of machinic flows of matter-energy whose lines traverse the page *as already* worldly: a libidinal-textual economy. I here follow Charles Stivale in his claim that schizoanalysis is first and foremost a *literary* assemblage of theoretical and practical concerns:

In re-reading the works of various authors in light of the machinic syntheses, Deleuze and Guattari reveal the molecular and fragmented discourse of schizophrenic deterritorialization, and such a re-reading itself is an overt political act inherent to the schizoanalytic project, meant to subvert the grip of power exerted by capitalist and Oedipal reterritorialization.⁷⁵

Where for Moretti’s abstract models and Casanova’s world-republic *content* is primary (as character, plot, narrative etc) for the schizoanalyst these linguistic-signifying forms are always already a molar crystallisation of impersonal desire – a political economy of signs is already in operation. The components of literary schizoanalysis are the circulation of affects and percepts which are not located in a speaker but which, as blocs of sensation, traverse bodies, subjects and territories.

⁷⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* p.1.

⁷⁵ Charles J. Stivale, “Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari: Schizoanalysis & Literary Discourse” *Substance* 9:4, Issue 29 (1980), pp.46-57 (p.50).

Hence Deleuze and Guattari's fascination with texts whose linguistic materials are always in a process of breaking down – stuttering, stammering, repeating – and whose ultimate goal is the final dissolution of the subject (Kafka, Artaud):

In language and in writing itself, sometimes the letters as breaks, as shattered partial objects – and sometimes the words as undivided flows, as non-decomposable blocks [...] constitute asignifying signs that deliver themselves over to the order of desire: rushes of breath and cries.⁷⁶

But I will go further than Deleuze and Guattari in attempting to disinvest the text of any determining relation to its author-function. The danger of schizoanalysis understood as both theory and praxis lies in its tendency (such as at times in *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature*) to reflect its own decoding of Oedipal desire back onto the body of the author as the site of deterritorialisation. Alongside the invocation to “kill metaphor” should have been the ultimatum to remove from literary studies the pervasive influence of the proper noun.⁷⁷ Thus the geoliterature which I will map will not be read *canonically* – as the articulation of *a* history of authorial personae however marginalised – but as a radical cartography of desiring-production without subjective predicates. This cartography of textual-machines takes at face value Foucault's claim that “It would be a mistake to read *Anti-Oedipus* as *the* new theoretical reference (you know, that much-heralded theory that finally encompasses everything, that finally totalises and reassures, the one we are told we ‘need so badly’ in our dispersion and specialization” and anachronistically redirects it towards the claim that world-literary studies has finally done away with questions of ontology.⁷⁸ In fact, it is the practices of interpretation, representation and signification which return with renewed vigour in Moretti's *Conjectures* and Casanova's *World Republic of Letters*. My goal, however, will not be to do away with theoretical abstraction in itself, but rather to reveal the insufficient degree of abstraction presently at work in world-systems analysis. As Manuel DeLanda has pointed out, abstract machines are not metaphorical devices (which

⁷⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* p.264.

⁷⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, p.70.

⁷⁸ Michel Foucault, “Preface” in Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* p.xiv.

give meaning to their referent) but rather express the organisational composition of heterogeneous elements in any given structure:

When we say (as Marxists used to say) that "class struggle is the motor of history" we are using the word "motor" in a purely metaphorical sense. However, when we say that "a hurricane is a steam motor" we are not simply making a linguistic analogy: rather we are saying that hurricanes embody the same diagram used by engineers to build steam motors, that is, that it contains a reservoir of heat, that it operates via thermal differences and that it circulates energy and materials through a (so-called) Carnot cycle. Deleuze and Guattari use the term "abstract machine" to refer to this diagram shared by very different physical assemblages.⁷⁹

By replacing the Jamesonian language of abstract models with Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the abstract machine, our speculative cartography will aim to collapse the ontological gap between text and world such that the map is immanent to the territory it expresses as an abstract instance of desiring-production. The world—as a perceived relation between the subject and the Earth—is already a territorialisation of celestial space.

In this way I will situate Deleuze and Guattari as part of an emerging minor line of materialism in contemporary European philosophy which literary studies has thus far overlooked. Jane Bennett has summarised the concerns of this new materialism as, firstly, "to paint a positive ontology of vibrant matter, which stretches received concepts of agency, action, and freedom sometimes to the breaking point" and secondly "to dissipate the onto-theological binaries of life/matter, human/animal, will/determination, and organic/inorganic using arguments and other rhetorical means to induce in human bodies an aesthetic-affective openness to material vitality" which cumulates in a speculative "style of political analysis that can better account for the contributions of nonhuman

⁷⁹ Manuel DeLanda, *The Geology of Morals: A Neo-Materialist Interpretation* (1995) <<http://www.t0.or.at/delanda/geology.htm>> [accessed 23 April 2018].

actants”.⁸⁰ This commitment to the creative capacity of matter to self-organise through a process of differentiation immanent to itself (which Deleuze and Guattari refer to as “a life proper to matter, a vital state of matter as such, a material vitalism” will be read against the grain of the Marxism familiar to students of world-literary studies.⁸¹ In this case any materialism which is at the same time an immanent philosophy, must *begin* with the aesthetic as a reconfiguration by means of artistic materials the flows of matter-energy which cut across subject positions via lines of flight and vectors of transformation in the real world.⁸² By revealing the subject not as the authorial origin of a text but as an effect *of* writing, the following chapters will progressively constitute a speculative cartography of lines of flight wherein the text takes a piloting role in the political and not just its *a posteriori* representation. World literary theory is tempted to take the world as given, just as for Freudian psychoanalysis (according to Deleuze and Guattari) the unconscious is that which pre-exists desire: the “theatre of representation” on which the Oedipal tragedy plays itself out.⁸³ The problem here is not with conceptual abstraction per se – but the type of abstraction at work. Moretti’s abstract models (from his earliest definitions of World Literature through to his contemporary work on networks) consistently fail to identify the regime of the signifier as the form of abstraction proper to Capital itself. Deleuze and Guattari describe the signifier as “despotic” because of the way it subordinates all the elements in its structure under an axiomatic principle.⁸⁴ Value, as *the* signifier under capitalist social relations, decodes all previous modes of desiring-production only to reterritorialise them under the principle of exchange as the form of abstraction *par excellence*. By concerning itself too often with metaphor and representation, world-literary studies gives away too much ground to Capital’s continual capture of resistance. By contrast, Deleuze and Guattari oppose the concept of machine to that of structure

⁸⁰ Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Economy of Things*, (London: Duke University Press 2010), p.x.

⁸¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.454.

⁸² In this sense Deleuze both is and is not a Kantian, because he makes the third critique the whole basis of his philosophy of sensation rather than the outlier historians of philosophy have usually considered it.

⁸³ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p.294.

⁸⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.129.

in order to show how Capital attempts to fix desire as Oedipal abstraction, but is itself capable of being overtaken by new connections between the machinic elements of desiring-production – new relations of material flows between organs, bodies and territories. In his preface to Guattari's early articulation of the concept of the machine in *Psychoanalysis and Transversality* (1972), Deleuze states its antagonistic relation to structures of signification:

It's about grasping that point of *rupture* where, precisely, political and libidinal economy are *one and the same*. The unconscious is nothing else than the order of group subjectivity which introduces explosive machines into so-called signifying structures as well as causal chains, forcing them to open to liberate their hidden potentialities as a future reality influenced by the rupture.⁸⁵

Political and psychological oppression, conceived as a co-extensive field, render the revolutionary potential of the aesthetic not in terms of an avant-garde or individual artistic autonomy (as some hard-won compromise with Capital) but as a line of flight embedded as deeply as possible in the circuits of capital itself. This is the object which a schizoanalytic cartography of literary forms will aim towards.

If, therefore, for Deleuze and Guattari desire is always already social, it does not enter into the social by way of trauma resulting from the separation from the mother and identification with the law of the father. The connection of organs and material flows which produces the body of the infant is already a social coding of desire. Freudian desire is characterised by lack – by separation from the object. In the same way Moretti and Casanova are at all times obsessed by discovering the world-system as the determining ground from which the text has been cut off. For schizoanalysis the world—conceived as both *la Terre* and *la terre* (planet and land)—is constantly in a state of being produced anew by the machinic flows, lines and cuts in the self-organising matter which constitutes it. Literary works belong to the field of desiring production as specific strata on the plateaus of material history

⁸⁵ Gilles Deleuze, "Three Group-Related Problems", in *Desert Islands And Other Texts 1952-1974* Trans. Christopher Bush et. al. (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e) 2004; Paris: Les Editions de Minuit 2002), pp.193-203.

and are never totally captured by representation in the form of value. All texts are political in their major or minor relation to desire as a socially constituted-constituting force, by the lines of flight which they choose to activate or disavow, and not in the content of their enunciation. "Every political economy is libidinal".⁸⁶ If the aim of schizoanalysis is the production of the unconscious as the collective decoding of desire, I will adapt this method not in order to discover the world-system upon which literature rests, but in order to express the capacity of literary works to creatively intervene in the world as an immanent cartography of material, linguistic, textual, bodily, institutional and cultural lines of flight. Rather than the interpretative models of Jamesonian cultural studies, or the discourse analysis of deconstruction, or the data-mining of world-systems analysis, I will argue for a geoliterature whose aberrant movements, deterritorialising vectors and lines of flight are immanent to the encounters between textual, linguistic, human and non-human bodies in the world. World literature is a war-machine whose revolutionary potential, its becoming-minor, has until now only sporadically been mapped.

⁸⁶ Jean-Francois Lyotard, *Libidinal Economy*, trans. Iain Hamilton Grant, (London: Athlone Press 1993; Paris: Les Editions de Minuit 1974), p.108.

2. Towards a Geoliterature

2.1. Machinic capitalism and the “general intellect” of World Literature

Destroy the 'I' in literature: that is, all psychology. The sort of man who has been damaged by libraries and museums, subjected to a logic and wisdom of fear, is of absolutely no interest anymore. We must abolish him in literature and replace him once and for all with matter [...] capture the breadth, the sensibility, the instincts of metals, stones, woods, and so on, through the medium of free objects and capricious motors. Substitute, for human psychology now exhausted, the lyrical obsession with matter.¹

Marinetti's *Technical Manifesto For a Futurist Literature* wants to both describe and effect a becoming-material of language. On this question the various groups of the European avant-garde, from Italian futurism to Oulipo, have all at one point or another shared an aim to create a materialist semiotics—a language of the Earth—either by a-signifying graphology (visual matter) or a poetics of pure noise (sonic matter). That is to say, the “matter” of writing (the substance upon which markings are inscribed) becomes expressive at the same time as its signifying capacity is nullified. For Deleuze, in *The Logic of Sense*, this expressive capacity of writing has two competing trajectories, which he identifies on the one hand with Lewis Carroll—whose portmanteau words have sense without meaning—and Antonin Artaud on the other (whose texts tend towards a visceral phonetic chaos).² If we also consider the possibility of a materialist semiotics one of the main philosophical projects behind Deleuze's collaboration with Félix Guattari, the literary aspects of their work (collaborative writing, a fondness for neologism,

¹ Filippo Tomasso Marinetti, “Technical Manifesto for a Futurist Literature” in *Futurism: An Anthology*, ed. by Lawrence Rainey, Christine Poggi and Laura Wittman, (Connecticut: Yale University Press 2009 [1912]).

² This is why, for Deleuze, Artaud's attempted translation of Carroll's *Jabberwocky* fails—because Artaud cannot shift from one a-signifying register to the other. See Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester and Charles Stivale (London: Continuum 2004; Paris: Les Editions de Minuit 1969), p.100-103.

experimental structure, rhetorical irony) enter into a poetic constellation that places them firmly within the European avant-garde tradition of the twentieth century.

To refer to this constellation as a genre, however, already gives us several problems. With and without Guattari, Deleuze's writing continually flirts with the idea of its own literariness, despite the alleged separation between literature and philosophy one finds in *What Is Philosophy?*³ It's possible we could read several of Deleuze's works as manifestos in that they perform the rhetorical content of their arguments (*The Logic of Sense* at one point describes itself as "a psychological novel").⁴ Yet Deleuze is also disdainful of manifestos, and generally disavows avant-gardism as a political stance—a point to which I will return later. The question remains, then, what does it mean to write for Deleuze? Responding to the philosophical problems which underlie this question will provide the basis for my reading works of world literature as several lines of flight which act on the real via an a-signifying semiotics, rather than representing the real, or history, or culture, to us. The full scope of this reading, the capacity for literary texts to posit "a new Earth, a new people" from within the confines of the present, will be the focus of my later chapters.⁵ As part of that argument, I need to now confront how Deleuze and Guattari's materialist semiotics forces us to reconsider the book or text in light of the production of subjectivity under capitalism—that social relation which, as many have noted, makes a *weltliteratur* possible. The concept of geoliterature will extract from Deleuze and Guattari's materialist semiotics a way of thinking the immanent metamorphoses which texts undergo, as a "becoming with the world", that is other than representation or metaphor.

In Franco Moretti's Darwin-inspired reading of the European novel, emphasis is placed on the individuation of different forms across time. New forms and styles branch off from singular roots and spread across a local territory

³ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchill, (London: Verso 1994; Paris: Les Editions de Minuit 1991).

⁴ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, p.iv.

⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, p.99.

("foreign form and local materials").⁶ In its relation to time, the novel is singularly able to represent the growing domination of capital over all areas of social life in the nineteenth century both materially (as the literary form most amenable to commodification and mass production) and in content (narrative form binds together time and action through the figure of the character). The growth of the novel expresses the historical dominance of the value-form over time and space, as well as reflecting back onto its readers the image of the bourgeois individual as the social subject of capital.⁷ In this respect Moretti's materialism so far follows from Marx's in *Capital* Vol.1, where the production of subjects is merely *an effect* of the production of commodities. The manifesto, however, has its own peculiar relation to time. As Helen Palmer notes:

[The manifesto] somehow pre-empts itself; [...] there is something outside of conventional temporality that announces itself as a lack. The manifesto genre has its own strange temporality, perched between the state of things either as they are or as they have been, but necessarily addressing and attempting to shape the future from within its structure.⁸

The manifesto-as-form doesn't quite fit into Moretti's evolutionary schema which tends to resist cross-contamination and contagion once forms have been individuated (the tree only grows outwards in space and time). The manifesto does violence to formal categories by introducing alien or mutant elements into their make-up which announce their newness to readers via their very unreadability according to preestablished norms. In this way, manifestos aim to actively *produce* the kinds of subjects by whom they are intended to be read. By announcing an antagonism to the present (the "now" of which the manifesto speaks which is both beyond the now of its audience and less than any one moment "in time"), the manifesto effaces its own origin as a product of labour-time. Instead they appear as messages from another time or another world: their formal mode of anti-formalism is inherently revolutionary.

⁶ Franco Moretti, "Conjectures on World Literature", in *Distant Reading* (London: Verso 2013) p.52.

⁷ C.f. Franco Moretti, *The Bourgeois: Between History and Literature*, (London: Verso 2014).

⁸ Helen Palmer, *Deleuze and Futurism: A Manifesto for Nonsense*, (London: Bloomsbury 2014) p.76.

The first victim of this effacement is the idea of the author. In naming “futurism” Marinetti and his co-conspirators call for the creation of an archetype which does not yet exist (the futurist), but which reflexively refers to a group-subject (*the futurists*) as the author(s) of the manifesto who are without a given community or nation. In contrast to the way language is usually conceived as a representational or symbolic system, here the subject of the enunciation (the futurist) is an *effect* of the utterance rather than its progenitor.⁹ Updating and expanding upon J.L Austin’s theory of speech acts, Deleuze and Guattari refer to this phenomenon as the pragmatics of language—having to do with language-as-action—and make it the cornerstone of their critique of linguistics in *A Thousand Plateaus*. In effect, they reverse the way sociolinguistics as the study of language use is usually conceived as a minor field of linguistic science, and reject any study of language that doesn’t begin with the material effects of utterances in the real world. This is the principle of immanence we encountered in the previous chapter, but with a more radical inflection than that found even in structuralism, where language as a system is immanent to itself, but not the world. As one of several regimes of signs, language is for Deleuze and Guattari a dynamic system interacting with other matter-flows in the real world. As an example, Deleuze and Guattari make an (untypical) reference to Lenin’s text of 1917:

Pragmatics is a politics of language [...]. We may take as an example [...] the formation of a properly Leninist type of statement in Soviet Russia, basing ourselves on a text by Lenin entitled “On Slogans”. This text constituted an incorporeal transformation that extracted from the masses a proletarian class as an assemblage of enunciation *before the conditions were present for the proletariat to exist as a body*. A stroke of genius from the first Marxist international, which ‘invented’ a new type of class: workers of the world unite! Taking an advantage of the break with the social democrats, Lenin invented or decreed yet another incorporeal transformation that extracted from the proletariat class a vanguard as an assemblage of enunciation and

⁹ By introducing the concept of ‘structure’ Saussurian linguistics also maintains this idea, though still within the confines of representation.

was attributed to the 'Party', a new type of party as a distinct body, at the risk of falling into a properly bureaucratic system of redundancy.¹⁰

More so than its communicative content, the slogan is a type of sign (or regime of signs) that effects a transformation of the social body by extracting certain elements (the bodies of the masses) and reconstituting them as a new class-body.

What Deleuze and Guattari want is a philosophy of language entirely other than linguistics or the kind of empirical historiography practiced by Moretti, in which the incorporeal production of subjects, classes and parties is enmeshed in the corporeal and material production of commodities, factories, institutions. The relation between those spheres thought to be immaterial, ideological or symbolic and the material ground of those phenomena in the means of production is no longer the latter determining the former but is instead a *machinic* relation in which each part interacts with and acts upon the other in a mode of social reproduction which is simultaneously abstract and concrete. Abstract machines contain material and immaterial or linguistic elements, but neither takes precedence over the other.

To conceptualise social reproduction as a kind of machinic relation between material and immaterial elements destroys the notion of the psychological individual as the necessary subject of capital. In fact, Marx speculates on this very conclusion in his notebooks from February-May of 1858, known as "the fragment on machines". The machine in this instance is not reducible to technology as is common in some of the reductionist readings the fragment has inspired since its rediscovery in the 1960's.¹¹ Instead it is the *relation* between the worker (variable capital) and the machine (fixed capital) which tends to directly imbue objects with social knowledge—what Marx refers to as the development of a "general intellect" analogous to Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the abstract machine:

The worker's activity, reduced to a mere abstraction of activity, is determined and regulated on all sides by the movement of the machinery,

¹⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, (London: Continuum 2004; Paris: Les Editions De Minuit 1980), pp.91-92. Emphasis added.

¹¹ C.f Paul Mason, *Postcapitalism: A Guide to our Future*, (London: Penguin 2016).

and not the opposite. The science which compels the inanimate limbs of the machinery, by their construction, to act purposefully, as an automaton, does not exist in the worker's consciousness, but rather acts upon him through the machine as an alien power, as the power of the machine itself.¹²

The argument that follows in the fragment is a description of a type of social consciousness distributed across material and immaterial elements in a co-determinate, that is, machinic relation of mutual production:

The production process has ceased to be a labour process in the sense of a process dominated by labour as its governing unity. Labour appears, rather, merely as a conscious organ, scattered among the living workers at numerous points of the mechanical system; subsumed under the total process of the machinery itself, as itself only a link of the system, whose unity exists not in the living workers but rather in the living (active) machinery, which confronts his individual, insignificant doings as a mighty organism.¹³

Hence capital is engaged not only in the social reproduction of the subjects it requires, but also in the active *breaking down* of these subjectivities in the course of its increasing objectification of social knowledge. It is the simultaneously determined and contingent position of the worker's consciousness that provides the potential for sabotage – the introduction of slogans and signs into the social body which short-circuit the incorporeal production of subjectivity. Hence Guattari, echoing Marx's sentiment, proposes the concept of the machine as a distributed and non-technical (i.e abstract) principle of social organisation:

In the history of philosophy the problem of the machine is generally considered a secondary component of a more general question, that of the *techne*, the techniques. Here I would like to propose a reversal of the view in which the problem of technique is a part of a much more extensive machine issue. This 'machine' is open to the outside and its machinic

¹² Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Martin Nicolaus (London: Penguin 1993 [1858]), p.693.

¹³ Ibid.

environment and maintains all kinds of relationships to social components and individual subjectivities. It is hence a matter of expanding the concept of the technological machine into one of the machinic assemblage.¹⁴

As general intellect, language and literature are specific elements in a machinic assemblage of production that is simultaneously constituting of social subjectivity and constituted by those subjects as their collective enunciation.¹⁵ This double articulation of machinic and discursive assemblages renders Moretti's sociology only one-sided, as both presuppose one another but without any kind of causal relation between the two. The rise in popularity of the manifesto since the late nineteenth century is evidence to this fact—as it shows how the evolutionary development of bourgeois consciousness (the subject of Moretti's late work) is periodically subjected to periods of devolutionary *anti-production*, schizophrenic cuts and a-signifying breaks by textual matter. As a cliché with at least some degree of truth, new works of art are never recognised as such when they first appear.

If, following McKenzie Wark, we should consider Moretti's sociology of literary forms a "computationally assisted distant reading [...] technique of discovering the general intellect at work" then the manifesto, in fact the entire history of the European avant-garde, might better be understood in terms of an *anti-genre* for the way in which it attempts to reverse-engineer the conditions of its reception and the subjects to whom it lays claim.¹⁶ By becoming imperceptible to its readership (where they are no longer able to discern *what* it is exactly they are reading) the manifesto is no longer "just" a commodity, but in fact withdraws from the object-world of the bourgeoisie. Likewise, Deleuze and Guattari's materialist semiotics (the philosophy of language they extract from the non-standard linguistics of Louis Hjelmslev, J.L. Austin and V.N. Voloshinov) is better read as an

¹⁴ Félix Guattari, "Über Maschinen" in *Ästhetik und Maschinelismus. Texte zu und von Félix Guattari*, ed. by Henning Schmidgen, (Berlin: Merve Verlag, 1995), pp.115-132.

¹⁵ Marshall McLuhan makes a similar point the basis of his study of mass media technology (the medium *is* the message), albeit beginning with the abstract figure of 'man' we can do without. Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, (London: Routledge 1964).

¹⁶ McKenzie Wark, *Dividuum: On Gerald Raunig* (2016) <<http://www.publicseminar.org/2016/11/dividuum/#.WHjK5xuLTIU>> [accessed 3 November 2017].

anti-sociology of language, by considering the stylistic and formally experimental aspects of the work as integral to the workings of the textual machine.

Why, then, does Deleuze discourage the writing of manifestos? In a short essay published alongside the Italian dramatist Carmelo Bene's version of Richard III, Deleuze writes admiringly of Bene that he "is disgusted by so-called avant-garde formulas" and "does not believe in the avant-garde".¹⁷ The problem, for Deleuze (with and without Guattari), is that avant-gardism too easily turns upon the relation between the aristocratic and the popular: between the *subject* of futurism and the people they lay claim to. The manifesto begins and ends with a new kind of *person*, whereas the minor literature Deleuze begins in the middle ("le milieu") and works by subtraction ("amputation") from both language and polity.¹⁸ If manifestos include non-representational or performative uses of language, this can only ever (according to Deleuze) be instrumental. Minor literature (or, in this instance, theatre) "does not change the world or cause a revolution", does not belong either to the past or the future but is itself "untimely".¹⁹ For the same reason, Deleuze is sceptical of a popular theatre such as Brecht's which only mirrors the narcissism of Bourgeois theatre's private, individualised affairs with "a narcissism of the worker" which forms a kind of:

communication between the theatre maker and the people [which] privileges a certain *representation of conflicts*, conflicts of the individual and society, of life and history [...] but Brecht himself only wants them to be 'understood' and for the spectator to have the elements of a possible 'solution'. This is not to leave the domain of representation but only to pass from one dramatic pole of bourgeois representation to an epic pole of popular representation.²⁰

¹⁷ Gilles Deleuze, "One Less Manifesto", in *Mimesis, Masochism and Mime: The Politics of Theatricality in Contemporary French Theatre*, ed. Timothy Murray (Michigan: Michigan University Press 1997), pp.245-252. Originally published in Carmelo Bene and Gilles Deleuze, *Superpositions: Richard III Suivi de Un Manifeste de Moins*, (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit 1979).

¹⁸ Ibid. pp.241-242.

¹⁹ Ibid. pp.252, 242.

²⁰ Ibid. p.252.

Conflicts, either between individuals or groups, are for Deleuze already the aggregates of minor lines of becoming and variation which are pre-individual and non-linguistic. Bene's theatre is, by contrast, "humble" in that it does not call for an anti-theatre or an end to theatre or for a new theatre but "amounts almost to nothing" by placing all the aggregates of the theatrical institution (stage, actor, character, prop, set, language, audience) into variation, amputating each element in turn so as to create sensations which are affectual and a-signifying.²¹ Deleuze finds a similar operation in Kafka, whose austerity of style subtracts from language as many representational elements as possible in order to express what is *not* linguistic (the chattering of insects and other animals) or in Bacon's triptychs, where figuration gives way to that which has no representational subject (the scream or cry).

If not exactly an avant-garde poetics, how can Deleuze and Guattari's materialist semiotics be made to speak to literature? How does writing as social praxis exist between a collective assemblage of enunciation and a machinic assemblage of production if not via metaphor, reflection or representation? If the basic function language is, according to Deleuze and Guattari, to enact "incorporeal transformations" which code and recode the world, and not to symbolise or represent the world, then language must be understood as a certain kind of materiality (a composition of forces) amongst a wider plane of material interactions between things.²² This is to deny the scientific aspect of linguistics which sets up language as an ideal or abstract system with universal rules that mirror the natural laws of objects studied by the physical sciences. Against these universal laws taken to be innate in the brain, persons or subjects are the after-effects of a language system which enacts incorporeal transformations on bodies. *I* simply am what can be said about me. For Deleuze, Thomas Hardy is a better linguist on this point than Chomsky:

Take as an example the case of Thomas Hardy: his characters are not people or subjects, they are collections of intensive sensations, each is such a

²¹ Ibid.

²² Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.89.

collection, a packet, a bloc of variable sensations. There is a strange respect for the individual, an extraordinary respect: not because he would seize upon himself as a person and be recognised as a person, in the French way, but on the contrary because he saw himself and saw others as so many 'unique chances' - the unique chance from which one combination or another had been drawn. Individuation without a subject. And these packets of sensations in the raw, these collections or combinations, run along the lines of chance, or mischance, where their encounters take place—if need be, their bad encounters which lead to death, to murder.²³

This is the central role of literature for Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy of language: to interject itself between the collective assemblages of enunciation which legislate that which (as Foucault describes) is seeable and sayable in any given society, and the machinic assemblages of production which provide the institutional, economic, and concrete contents of those enunciations. This is not the same as the base and superstructure of orthodox Marxisms, where the former determines the latter, instead both are arranged in a relationship of "reciprocal presupposition".²⁴ Writing is thus not representing the world (orthodox Marxism) or retreating into an ideal realm of the symbolic (orthodox Lacanism) but is a process of metamorphoses that redistributes along a chaotic trajectory what can be said about the world and who can do the saying—rarely, if ever, a person.

Here again we need to return to the concept of the line of flight, the aberrant movement which escapes the regime of signification through which human bodies are subjected via the capitalist axiomatic. In the chapter on linguistics from *A Thousand Plateaus* these movements are given the name "style" and refer not only to specific instances of language use, but are themselves those incorporeal transformations which escape signification, or are otherwise extra-linguistic. Where the subject of an enunciation (which traditional linguistics takes as its objective fact) is exposed to their outside—to the forces, codes and regimes of

²³ Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues II*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson, Barbara Habberjam and Eliot Ross (London: Continuum 2006; Paris: Flammarion 1977), p.40.

²⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.50.

signs which compose them *as* a subject who speaks and of whom we can speak—they become imperceptible to those structures. In reference to Jean-Luc Godard, Deleuze again invokes those utterances and intercessions in speech (silence, stammering, screaming) that are imperceptible to linguistics, but are in fact the conditions by which we can separate words and things, subject and world—the deafening silence of what is non-human in language:

Language is presented to us as basically informative, and information as basically an exchange. Once again, information is measured in abstract units. But it's doubtful whether the schoolmistress, explaining how something works or teaching spelling, is transmitting information. She's instructing, she's really delivering precepts. And children are supplied with syntax like workers being given tools, in order to produce utterances conforming to accepted meanings. We should take him quite literally when Godard says children are political prisoners. Language is a system of instructions rather than a means of conveying information [...] then there's something like silence, or like stammering, or screaming, something slipping through underneath the redundancies and information, letting language slip through, and making itself heard, in spite of everything. [...] So how can we manage to speak without giving orders, without claiming to represent something or someone, how can we get people without the right to speak, to speak; and how can we restore to sounds their part in the struggle against power? I suppose that's what it means to be like a foreigner in one's own language, to trace a sort of line of flight for words.²⁵

It is never a person who speaks, but bodies and forces which are spoken of. Everything is hearsay: a machine for producing subjectivity. Updating this familiar structuralist notion (where language already is an other which inhabits us) for Deleuze the system of *langue* is not a structure with specific variations, but a continuous variation with specific instances of structuration. This is why literature or poetry does not need an avant-garde: because the system (as continuous

²⁵ Gilles Deleuze, "Three Questions on *Six Times Two*", in *Negotiations 1972-1990*, (New York: Columbia University Press 1995; Paris: Les Editions de Minuit 1990), p.40-41.

variation with only abstract standardisation) is open at every point, exposed to its own redundancy and vulnerable to sabotage at every turn. If minor literature had heroes, they would not be artistic geniuses able to transcend the everyday, but bureaucrats, clerks and other workers composed out of a bricolage of institutional forms run amok: the merchant Georg Bendemann whose “I swear!” Kafka has taken a life of its own; Bartleby the scrivener, whose “I would prefer not to” Melville turns into a kind of corporate virus.²⁶ It is, conversely, wherever language is at its most rigid and stratified that it is most open to subterfuge. This is why the Algerian novel offers a counterpoint to the way the postcolonial novel is usually conceived by, for example, Moretti and Casanova (as foreign form unevenly combined with local content). Instead Algerian writing undergoes an extreme degree of formal and compositional variation (partly influenced by the rise of the *nouveau roman* in France) but where Algerian identity is absent, effaced or impossible. The people do not exist. It’s in Algeria that the European avant-garde exhausts itself, at the same time as newer forms of economic and cultural oppression are coming over the horizon. The creative response to this situation by certain Algerian texts constitutes a line of flight away from national allegory, from identity, and from the representational role of the text.

My argument, that the Algerian novel is best conceived of as a line of flight, follows Deleuze and Guattari in mapping these aberrant movements, where the French language is made to stutter under Algerian hands, via the materialist semiotics of J.L. Austin, Louis Hjelmslev and V.N Volosinov, each of whose ideas they draw upon in order to develop an alternative philosophy of language to the Saussurean signifier-signified model. This alternative, sometimes called pragmatics but not consistently so, draws from Anglo-American literature more so than structuralist linguistics, but I will depart from Deleuze and Guattari’s reading habits and instead focus on the form of the Algerian novel following the war for independence from 1954-1962. This may seem an odd decision given Deleuze’s famous claim of the superiority of English and American literature, but will provide

²⁶ See Franz Kafka, “The Judgement: A Story for F”, in *Metamorphoses and Other Stories*, trans. Michael Hofmann, (London: Penguin 2007 [1913]), pp.35-50, and Herman Melville, “Bartleby the Scrivener”, in *Billy Budd, Bartleby and Other Stories*, (London: Penguin 2016 [1853]), pp.17-55.

us with clues as to why avant-garde writing or so-called revolutionary aesthetics reaches a stumbling block for Deleuze writing in 1979. Here the Algerian novel is significant in that it consists in a subaltern use of a high-modernist, European literary form by a colonised people—*but at the very point at which* those cultures of European domination undergo a transformation to the forms of neo-colonialism practised by the global or integrated financial capitalism which still dominate today.²⁷

What becomes of minor literature once the new institutions of global capitalism (such as the IMF, World Bank, United Nations—all formed shortly before or after Algerian independence) succeed in incorporating those immaterial aspects of labour (subjectivity, language, communication, memory) thought to be the preserve of literary authors, into the very fabric of capitalist reproduction? Under these conditions, the idea of narrating the nation which World-Literary Theory continually wants to move beyond, is simply redundant: because the people given the name “Algerian” do not exist, or are missing. Reading Kateb Yacine’s *Nedjma*, Nabile Farès’ *Exile and Hopelessness* and Assia Djebar’s *Fantasia* alongside *A Thousand Plateaus*, I extrapolate from Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy a geoliterature which works to counter the capture of literary expression by new modes of capitalism working via language and sensation themselves. This geoliterature is composed out of three moments or concepts in the materialist pragmatics developed by Deleuze and Guattari—the “order-word” or slogan (*mots d’ordre*) extracted from Austin’s speech-act theory; the notion of “double articulation” borrowed from Hjelmslev’s structuralist semiotics; and the theory of free-indirect style Deleuze and Guattari take from Voloshinov’s philosophy of language.²⁸ In doing so I will make the figure of the line of flight the key refrain in my reading of world literature in later chapters—as those aberrant movements, passages and escapes by which literature discloses a people and an Earth yet to come.

²⁷ C.f Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*, (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 2001).

²⁸ There is some suggestion that V.N Voloshinov was in fact a pseudonym of Bhaktin, and Deleuze and Guattari at times refer to his works in this way. I will refer to Voloshinov as the author of these texts regardless.

The term geoliterature is not my own, but I do want to significantly develop and expand its application by Kenneth Surin, whereby it denotes a Deleuzian literary imaginary in which “the book is an assemblage, and that one is a writer precisely because one invents assemblages (of a particular and quite specific kind)”.²⁹ Here Surin draws upon Deleuze’s distinction between the supposedly arborescent tendencies of French literature and the affinity between Anglo-American literature and British empiricism, Spinozism and Stoicism. This affinity centres on the concept of the assemblage in *A Thousand Plateaus*, whereby in the book-as-assemblage:

one side of the assemblage faces what Deleuze and Guattari call ‘the strata’, that is, a plethora of codes and milieux characterised above all by a ceaseless mobility. The other side of the assemblage faces ‘the body without organs’, that is, what is fundamentally an agglomeration of part-objects that interrupts the functioning of the three great strata (the organism (*l’organisme*), signifiability (*la signifiance*) and subjectification (*la subjectivation*) as organising principles).³⁰

The originality of this configuration for world-literary studies lies in its breaking with the dominant hermeneutic models of the kinds of materialism I identified in my introduction as Bourdieuan (in the case of Casanova) and Marxist (in the cases of Moretti and the theory of combined and uneven development derived from Trotsky utilised by the Warwick Research Collective). Rather than the familiar Marxist sense in which base and superstructure are conceived as two separate series, Surin (via Deleuze) theorises a geoliterature made up of several overlapping strata in which processes of signification pass between the series (rather than simply from modes of production to cultural forms which represent those productive forces as social relations in abstraction). In what follows I want to expand upon Surin’s indexing of geoliterature to the concept of assemblage, and propose a tripartite map of Deleuze and Guattari’s materialist semiotics via the concepts of order word,

²⁹ Kenneth Surin, “A Question of the Axiomatic of Desires: The Deleuzian Imagination of Geoliterature”, in *Deleuze and Literature*, ed. Ian Buchanan and John Marks, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2000), p.167.

³⁰ Ibid. pp.170-171.

assemblage (or their double articulation), and indirect discourse. In each case the book-as-assemblage replaces the book-as-object familiar to the various kinds of literary sociology conducted by world-literary theory in its materialist guise—wherein the particular scale or lens by which one reads world literature changes but the preponderance to see texts *only* as collections of metaphors, meanings and social relations in the abstract endures.³¹ In the case of geoliterature, texts are themselves always already worldly, and immanently bound up in processes of signification and subjectification which they (in specific cases and specific ways) are capable of breaking down. What I'm after, then, is a political unconscious of the text but not figured in terms of hermeneutics or representation, but a political *machinic*-unconscious of the text where modes of de-subjectification and deterritorialisation are immanent to reading and writing as forms of social praxis. In chapter 3 I will also distinguish Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of literature as geoliterature from certain kinds of hermeneutics belonging to postcolonial studies, in which some agency or capacity to make worlds rather than simply represent them is given back to the text, but often at the expense of returning us to an idealist or transcendent disposition towards what constitutes *a* world.³²

2.2. Kateb Yacine's *Nedjma*, or, the order-word

Deleuze was fond of referencing a remark by Proust, that “beautiful books are written in a sort of foreign language”.³³ A cursory glance finds Deleuze directly quoting or paraphrasing this comment in *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, *Dialogues* (with Claire Parinet), *Essays Critical and Clinical*, “S for Style” from the televised *L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze*, and a 1976 interview with *Cahiers du Cinema*, on the subject of Jean Luc Godard's TV miniseries *Six Fois Deux*. It's unusual

³¹ One can see the dominance of this hermeneutic model in words such as ‘signifies’, ‘reflects’, ‘represents’ and ‘registers’, for instance.

³² See, for example, Pheng Cheah's *What is a World? On Postcolonial Literature as World Literature*, (North Carolina: Duke University Press 2016).

³³ Marcel Proust, “Notes on Literature and Criticism”, in *Against Saint-Beuve and Other Essays*, trans. John Sturrock, (London: Penguin 1988 [1908]), p.93.

to find such consistency in Deleuze's vocabulary across the breadth of his work, which suggests that this idea holds a certain power over Deleuze's various literary encounters, and is instructive for how he understands the special instances of language-use called literary. In the same passage from *Against Saint-Beuve*, Proust goes on to say that reading does not consist in understanding or communicating but, paradoxically, in misinterpretation. It just so happens that in great works "all our misinterpretations are beautiful".³⁴ Proust is referring not to a convergence between author and reader, but a process of diffraction and transformation that passes in-between the signifier and the signified: interpretation or the transmission of meaning in fact refers to a composition of forces which are pre-individual (the misinterpretations are not intentional). This short sentence comprises all the essential elements of Deleuze (and Guattari's) alternative theory of language they call "pragmatics" opposed to mainstream linguistics.³⁵ Pragmatics situates language within Deleuze's larger philosophy of immanence, as a theory of language-in-the-world, and will form the basis of my reading of world literature according to processes of de- and re-territorialisation—aberrant transformations named by the concept of the line of flight.

Mainstream or dominant theories of language operate by a series of rules or axioms Deleuze and Guattari diagnose as "the postulates of linguistics".³⁶ In *A Thousand Plateaus* these postulates consist of what Deleuze and Guattari see as four major mistakes. Firstly, linguistics is based on the study of language qua communication and the transmission of information. Secondly, it assumes the separation of language from other social phenomena. Thirdly, it postulates language as a science with universal laws and only local variation (whereas, as Deleuze and Guattari show, the minor field of sociolinguistics actually reveals language as a system in continuous variation and only contingent rules). Finally, it substitutes the study of linguistic signs for the study of all types of signs (when there are, in reality, *several* regimes of signs active in a given historical moment).

³⁴ Ibid. 94.

³⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.91.

³⁶ Ibid. 83.

These axioms are not consistent with any one linguistic theory or thinker, but seem to crop up at various times as transcendental rules or assumed orthodoxies across figures from a range of disciplines such as Noam Chomsky or Ferdinand de Saussure.³⁷ In response to these axioms, Deleuze and Guattari develop several conceptual weapons designed to replace them in the study of language and literature. Of these concepts, I will focus on three—the order-word, double articulation, and free-indirect discourse—as the three components of what I call a geoliterature, which will be used to map the social, political and cultural transformations undertaken by the Algerian novel prior to and following Algeria’s independence in 1962.

The theory of geoliterature which emerges is at the same time non-representational (it is fully part of the world and doesn’t stand hermetically or epistemologically apart from it), materialist (it consists of textual matter or inscriptions which are fully real and not symbolic), and political (because the texts themselves take part in and are a component of the transformations to Algerian life in the middle of the twentieth century). The first of these concepts, the order-word, is extracted from Deleuze and Guattari’s reading of J.L. Austin’s theory of speech acts and is key to articulating a way of reading world literature that is not representational.³⁸ This becomes especially important in the postcolonial context of Algeria, where the question of enunciation—of those bodies allowed to speak and which can be spoken of—is always already a politically vexed one.³⁹

³⁷ The importance of Chomsky’s universal grammar for Franco Moretti’s systemic approach to literature should make the relevance of Deleuze and Guattari’s intervention obvious for our purposes.

³⁸ As it is for Moretti and Casanova, c.f previous chapter.

³⁹ I mean this literally seeing as, from the perspective of the coloniser, the colonised do not exist as social subjects and are instead the background against which white subjectivity is fashioned. As Saidiya Hartman has expressed: “the slave is the object or the ground that makes possible the existence of the bourgeois subject and, by negation or contradistinction, defines liberty, citizenship, and the enclosures of the social body.” Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1997), p.62. C.f Chapter 4 on ‘blackness’ and social death.

In Kateb Yacine's *Nedjma* (1956)—published during the height of the Algerian war for independence but written and set largely in the years preceding it—Lakhdar, a student, is travelling by train from the city of Constantine to Bône:

Entouré de mégots consumés, Lakhdar contemple par le portière les champs de tabac, la plaine...

Travailler dans la nature comme grand-père, ne serait-ce pas la meilleure manière de vivre, puisqu'il n'est plus question d'étudier?

Dans ce wagon de troisième classe, une famille de compagnards s'apprête à descendre. Un jeune marin français aide le mari à rassembler une demi-douzaine de couffins, où les poules et les légumes voisinent avec les layettes du bébé. Lakhdar triture sa moustache: signe d'émotion ou de perplexité?

[Surrounded by stubbed-out butts, Lakhdar stares through the doorway at the fields of tobacco, the plain...

To labour with nature, like grandfather, wouldn't that be the best way to live, now that he couldn't study anymore?

In this third-class railway car, a farmer family is about to get off. A young French sailor helps the husband get together a half dozen crates where hens and vegetables are jumbled in with the baby's rags. Lakhdar nibbles his moustache: a sign of emotion or confusion?]⁴⁰

The passage takes place just after the Algerian protests of May 1945 and the subsequent massacre by French police in Sétif in which Lakhdar is caught up. After his arrest and torture by French officers, Lakhdar finds his student status has been revoked, forcing him to return to his relatives in Bône. The journey between Constantine and Bône is undertaken by several characters at different points in the novel's chronology, and carries both narratological and linguistic significance.

⁴⁰ Kateb Yacine, *Nedjma*, trans. Richard Howard, (Charlottesville and London: Caraf Books 1991; Paris: Éditions de Seuil 1956), pp.83-84 [69-70]. Hereafter references to the English translation will be given in square brackets after the original.

Constantine, one of the last Algerian cities to be conquered by the French, seems to retain its Arabic character in its physical and psychological architecture, where:

French authorities proved very reluctant to undertake the massive destruction and reconfiguration they had implemented everywhere else; they limited themselves to widening a few streets and creating an esplanade on the spot where their artillery had pierced the fortifications, recalling with its name the open wound in the city's defences: the Place de la Brèche.⁴¹

The city-as-wound transports its characters along its winding, confusing streets both spatially and temporally, where it serves as a portal to other points in Algeria's history: its predecessor, Cirta, being the site of the Numidian king Jugurtha's insurgency against the Romans. The novel and its protagonists often slip between these two chronologies, where:

les Romains sont remplacés les Corses; tous Corses, tous gardiens de prison, et nous prenons la succession des esclaves, dan le même bagne, près de la fosse aux lions, et les fils des Romains patrouillent l'arme à la bretelle.

[it's Corsicans instead of Romans now; all Corsicans, all prison guards, and we play the slaves' roles, in the same prison, near the lion pit, and the sons of the Romans do guard duty with rifles on their shoulders].⁴²

Both spatially and temporally, Algeria's history of conquest and insurgency becomes an open-air prison for its inhabitants, repeating across the novel's different locales and chronologies.

Bône, by contrast, offers a possible escape from the prison of colonial history, but only because the ancient city of Hippo on which it stands has been replaced by:

le terne avenir de la ville décomposée en îles architecturales, en oubliettes de cristal, en minarets d'acier repliés au cœur des navires, en wagonnets

⁴¹ Seth Graebner, 'Kateb Yacine and the Ruins of the Present', *Substance*, 36:1 (2007), pp.139-163 (p.146).

⁴² Yacine, *Nedjma*, p.47 [56].

chargés de phosphates et d'engrais, en vitrines royales reflétant les costumes irréalisables de quelque siècle futur

[a sombre future of the city decomposing in architectural islands, in oubliettes of crystal, minarets of steel screwed into the heart of ships, in trucks loaded with phosphates and fertilizer, in regal shop windows reflecting the unrealizable costumes of some century to come].⁴³

The metropolitan and mercantile Bône (now Annaba) in which the novel's protagonists wander after the student uprising of May 1948, labouring on an unnamed construction project, offers one possible future, but only to the extent that it effaces and obscures the characters' historical and cultural specificity to the same degree.

If, as Seth Graebner has suggested, the novel's chapters (divided into six, each with one or two sets of twelve parts) form a grid rather than a line, the cites of Constantine and Bône serve as wells or attractors that suck in surrounding characters and histories (hence the willed slippage between the Roman and Corsican/French colonisers).⁴⁴ This is where Lakhdar finds himself caught on his way to visit his relatives in Bône—including his cousin Nedjma, the French-Algerian woman with whom each of the novel's four protagonists is in love and who serves as the missing-centre of the novel's non-linear plot. The problem of the novel's structure—its often-confusing temporal and perspectival jumps—is rendered as a kind of linguistic guerrilla warfare. Cultural histories, competing Arabic vernaculars, Algerian mythology, and French authority all fight to override and stabilise their relationships with one another. In the train carriage, Lakhdar's confusion (or nervousness) arises not from the lack or impossibility of speech, but from his already having said far too much.⁴⁵ His desire to return to some pastoral relationship with the land, which he associates with patrilineal succession, is presented as internal monologue but without any personal pronouns. When this

⁴³ Ibid. p.76 [92].

⁴⁴ Graebner, p.147. Systems theory would also classify the two cities as 'attractors' – points to which a dynamic system (the novel's narrative) gravitates over time.

⁴⁵ This is opposed to conventional way in which the desire of the colonised is perceived as a lack or absence.

desire comes up against the reality of the impoverished farmer and his family, the novel switches to a third-person narrator, but whose authority is circumspect—questioning their own ability to “read” Lakhdar’s gestures and movements. In fact, it’s Lakhdar’s own utterances which alienate him from his fellow traveller – his French education distancing him from the Algerian farmers, “trémousser à chaque station, de crainte d’être arrivés”; “fidgeting at every station, afraid of missing their stop”, because they cannot read the names of the stations.⁴⁶ Lakhdar’s internal monologue, punctuated by ellipsis, and lacking an *I*, comes up against his already being spoken-for by language. His body is already constituted in and through language even before the act of utterance— “Lakhdar lorgne avec une moue son pantalon de coutil”; “Lakhdar stares sourly at his own drill trousers”.⁴⁷ There is no individual utterance prior to Lakhdar’s social being (as in Chomsky’s universal grammar) but a social organisation of signs and utterances out of which Lakhdar’s subject position is condensed or individuated. This effect of overcoding by language, where bodies and things are spoken for by language prior to their being spoken about by a speaker or subject, Deleuze and Guattari term the effect of the order-word (*mot d’ordre*).⁴⁸ Deleuze and Guattari will in fact claim that the order-word is “the elementary unit of language” over and above the subjects and objects of utterances which are merely the aggregates or after-effects of language.⁴⁹ It’s the effect of the order-word which allows us to make sense of the world and distinguish it from our selves. As to the first postulate of linguistics, that language is primarily about communication or that communication is the “stuff” of language, Deleuze and Guattari argue: “language is made not to be believed but obeyed, and to compel obedience”.⁵⁰

As previously discussed, the concept of the order-word or slogan expands and updates the English linguist J.L. Austin’s theory of speech-acts. For Austin, there are instances of language in which the performance of an utterance is also the

⁴⁶ Yacine, *Nedjma*, p.70 [84].

⁴⁷ Ibid. p.71 [85].

⁴⁸ Massumi’s translation of ‘order word’ for *mots d’ordre* is possibly too literal, where it can also mean ‘slogans’ in the sense of political campaigns or advertisements.

⁴⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.84.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

performing of an action, such that “when we say ‘I promise that...’ the case is very different from when we say ‘He promises that...’, or in the past tense ‘I promised that...’ For when we say ‘I promise that...’ we do perform an act of promising—we give a promise”.⁵¹ Here the saying of the utterance is not simply a representational or symbolic gesture, it effects a social obligation between two bodies that transforms their relation to one-another. The same can be said when a judge passes a sentence which transforms the body of the accused into the body of the condemned.⁵² A force passes over the subject of the statement (the “I” who promises) and the object of the statement (the one to whom a promise was made) that does not consist in the exchange of information, but the transposition of authority: “it was promised that...”. The social convention (the promise) exists prior to its inculcation in the body of the speaker, and is merely *individuated* by the act of language, such that all possible versions of the statement “I promise” can be said to exist as a virtual continuum, from which a specific instance is actualised by the act of promising, but which implies all potential variations of the promise as its social character: which Deleuze and Guattari call the “implicit presuppositions” of any statement.⁵³ The performative, considered as the elementary unit of any statement, assumes that there is a subject who speaks (I), a body or group of bodies which can be spoken of as subjects (you), as well as the social convention of promising understood by all speakers (the continuum of speech acts), in addition to the extra-linguistic and institutional predicates necessary for the statement to have force (the child that makes a promise to their parent, the lover that makes a promise to their beloved). These extra-linguistic or non-linguistic elements differentiate Deleuze and Guattari’s pragmatics from those transcendent studies of language called linguistics which assume language’s abstract or ideal nature in relation to the material world. Rather, for Deleuze and Guattari language is part of

⁵¹ J.L. Austin, *Philosophical Papers*, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press 1970), p.242.

⁵² The statement “I swear!” is also key to Deleuze and Guattari’s reading of Kafka’s *The Trial*.

⁵³ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.87.

a wider “regime of signs” which striates the real and gives meaning to the order of things.⁵⁴

This is why Deleuze and Guattari describe the operation of order-words as one of “redundancy” – they implicitly presuppose the existence of the things they speak about (when I make an utterance, I’m reflexively performing my visibility and knowability as an individuated subject, which is really the expression of the forces which inscribe my being):

We call order-words, not a particular category of explicit statements (for example, in the imperative), but the relation of every word or every statement to implicit presuppositions, on other words, to speech acts that are, and can only be, accomplished in the statement. Order-words do not concern demands only, but every act that is linked to statements by a ‘social obligation’. Every statement displays this link, directly or indirectly. Questions, promises, are order-words. The only possible definition of language is the set of all order-words, implicit presuppositions, or speech acts current in a language at any given moment.⁵⁵

Lakhdar’s predicament in *Nedjma*, as well as the other major characters whose movements across the narrative’s spatial grid compose its a-temporal structure, is not to find the authentic means to communicate his being, but always to escape or to flee the obligations, precepts and redundancies by means of which he can be “spoken of” in language. When the French officer offers Lakhdar a cigarette, what occurs is less a confrontation between the coloniser and the other, than an incorporeal transformation which passes between the two bodies:

Pourquoi tant de gentillesse? Ils veulent faire oublier leurs crimes...>>

Lakhdar chasse vite cette idée. << Brave marin! Peut-être que son père aussi est un misérable... Peut-être connaissait-il la faim sur le Vieux Port... Il n’a pas eu le temps d’être contaminé par ceux d’ici. D’ailleurs il changera

⁵⁴ The reference to Foucault is not incidental, as Deleuze and Guattari’s understanding of a regime of signs is loosely parallel to Foucault’s discursive formations which define the ‘seeable’ and ‘sayable’ of any historical situation.

⁵⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.87.

comme eux. On lui dira: ce sont des voleurs, des ingrats, ils ne respectant que la matraque. Il n'offrira plus de cigarette à un fellah...

[Why so nice? They want us to forget their crimes...' Lakhdar quickly dismisses this notion. 'A decent one! Maybe his father's poor too... Maybe he used to be hungry in Marseille... He hasn't had time to be contaminated by the ones around here. Besides, he'll change like them. They'll tell him: they're thieves, ingrates, all they respect is a bludgeon. He won't offer cigarettes to a fella any more...]⁵⁶

Lakhdar's evasion comes from his desire to avoid the function of the order-word—the knowledge that his boarding school dress trousers, as well as his literacy, mark him out from his fellow passengers and identify him more with the French officers than with the peasant farmer. The passage is conveyed in reported speech, but is presumably Lakhdar's internal monologue, and thus seems to alienate him from his own enunciations. What occurs is closer to an operation of language seeking new combinations of presuppositions. Perhaps the officer was poor himself? Perhaps he hasn't yet been co-opted by racial hatred? These escape-routes would allow Lakhdar to escape the social fact of his own assimilation into Francophone identity. There are in fact no individual enunciations in *Nedjma*, only sets of order-words and presuppositions ("collective assemblages" of enunciation) from which the novel tries to wrestle its characters away.⁵⁷ The novel's title-character, *Nedjma* (meaning "star" and symbolically associated with Algeria) barely appears in the novel, and instead serves as the missing signifier or empty space towards which each of the protagonists are simultaneously drawn. Her signifying role is void, because the people she supposedly represents do not exist:

De Constantine à Bône, de Bône à Constantine voyage une femme... C'est comme si elle n'était plus; on ne la voit que dans un train ou une caliche, et ceux qui la connaissent ne la distinguent plus parmi les passantes; ce n'est

⁵⁶ Kateb, *Nedjma*, p.70 [84].

⁵⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.88.

plus qu'une lueur exaspérée d'automne, une citée traquée qui se ferme au désastre; elle est voilée de noir.

[From Constantine to Bône, from Bône to Constantine a woman travels... It is as if she no longer existed; as if she were seen only in a train or a carriage, and those who know her no longer distinguish her from the other women passing by; she is no longer anything but a final gleam of autumn, a besieged city fending of disaster, she is veiled in black.]⁵⁸

The novel is not based around the Platonic dualism of form and simulacra—there is no authentic self to be revealed behind the veil. There is no reveal (*voilà!*) but only a process of veiling (*voilage*) which folds and refolds the various transformations the Algerian body undergoes. The veil, veiling, becomes its own figure of movement and change. It doesn't represent some other meaning except for the lines made by its folds. But nor is the veil fetishised as Arabic resistance to the colonial desire to see and recognise the face of the colonised—which would only reterritorialise Nedjma within a precolonial patriarchy. Characters' Desire for her is experienced not simply as sexual or marital conquest, but a process of open-ended transgression or flight from the despotic assemblages which possess and inscribe the bodies of Lakhdar and his friends. Here the other sense of the phrase line of flight (*ligne de fuite*) becomes apparent: the vanishing point (*pointe de fuite*) in painting where, from the perspective of the observer, lines appear to converge on the horizon and disappear. Curiously, the Arabic veil as a figure of imperceptibility does appear in Deleuze's work. In *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, Deleuze is fascinated by the photographs of veiled Arabic women taken by the Nineteenth century French psychiatrist Gaëtan Gatian de Clerambault. Clerambault's photography "amounts, despite what has been said, to much more than a simple personal perversion. [...] If Clerambault manifests a delirium, it is because he discovers the tiny hallucinatory perceptions of ether addicts in the folds of clothing".⁵⁹ The fold creates an inside from what is outside, by revealing the figure of the body at the same time as it

⁵⁸ Yacine, *Nedjma*, p.196 [pp.244-245].

⁵⁹ Gilles Deleuze, *Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley, (London: Continuum 2003; Paris: Les Editions de Minuit 1988), p.43.

obscures and differentiates its shape along several lines and contours.⁶⁰ Deleuze's description of the "figures without objects" which Clerambault's photographs disclose could equally be applied to *Nedjma*'s linguistic folds—the lines of flight on which it disperses character, plot, and history.

Nedjma is thus *not* a hermeneutic or signifying object in the usual sense representational or hermeneutic literary criticisms assume, but a collection of statements, order-words, performative utterances which the narrative tries to fold and refold in ways which will escape or evade the prefabricated identities of French, Algerian or even Maghrebian literature. The people are missing. Likewise, Deleuze and Guattari conceive of books as assemblages which are *subtracted* from the collective assemblage of enunciation active within the social and historical situation of their writing and which take on a life of their own.⁶¹ Geoliterature is not opposed to a transcendental or idealist canon, but to a way of reading which assumes the existence of subjects and worlds *prior* to their representation in language. This is the majoritarian position of linguistic science, against which Deleuze and Guattari craft a minor science—pragmatics—which is attuned to the way in which the world is always having to be organised, territorialised, or created anew. Literary texts are compounds or assemblages of linguistic materials and technical objects subtracted from the world, but they are not of a different order of being (i.e. the symbolic or the signifier) than the world itself. To demonstrate how texts are *doubly* articulated as worldly and as somehow subtracted from the world, I will now turn to Nabile Farès' *Exile and Hopelessness (L'Exil et le Désarroi)* (2012, [1976]) to conceptualise the second component of geoliterature—the book-as-assemblage.

⁶⁰ There is similarity to how, in his work on discipline, Foucault describes the appearance of transcendence from within immanence—as discussed in chapter 1.

⁶¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.4.

2.3. Assemblages and double articulation: Nabile Farès' *Exile and Helplessness*

Lakhdar's conundrum in *Nedjma* is not one of lack or absence, his speech stolen from him, but a surfeit of language (as a set of order-words) which striate and constrain him. The order-word renders his dream of a mythical or rural-Algerian identity impossible next to the actual and lived experience of the peasant farmers beside him, alongside the equal impossibility of solidarity with the French officer on the other side of the carriage. For Deleuze and Guattari the problem of linguistic colonialism is *not* one of hybridity or bilingualism, but the multiplicity of *types of language* active at any given time. In their work on Kafka, Deleuze and Guattari categorise these types of language-functions (though not yet developed into the full theory of language based on order-words from *A Thousand Plateaus*) into four essential characteristics borrowed from the linguist Henri Gobard:

Vernacular, maternal, or territorial language, used in rural communities or rural in its origins; a vehicular, urban, governmental, even worldwide language, a language of businesses, commercial exchange, bureaucratic transmission, and so on, a language of the first sort of deterritorialisation; referential language, language of sense and of culture, entailing a cultural reterritorialization; mythic language, on the horizon of cultures, caught up a spiritual or religious reterritorialization. The spatiotemporal categories of these languages differ sharply: vernacular language is here; vehicular language is everywhere; referential language is over there; mythic language is beyond.⁶²

The vernacular is the everyday, lived or colloquial use of language by a given community, whereas the vehicular is a state-language which imposes a false universality on the vernacular, subordinating it to a standard grammar and syntax. The referential is the partial reterritorialization of the vernacular-vehicular along

⁶² Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polen. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1986; Paris: Les Editions de Minuit 1975), p.23.

national or hegemonic lines, whereas the mythic is a full reterritorialization of the mixture of vernacular and vehicular into an imagined future which would reconcile their difference. Mythic language, however, is always deferred or at the horizon of culture—referring to an ideal or utopian space beyond the present community of speakers. The fields and plains always “over there” or outside the carriage constitute Lakhdar’s invocation of the deferred-mythical Algiers, whereas the peasant farmer and French officer enact the interplay between the vernacular use of Arabic (frequently in its oral or dialectic form) and the vehicular or deterritorialising movement of French (here spoken but elsewhere expressed as the written or institutional force of the protagonists’ education) which sucks Lakhdar into its orbit.⁶³

In this case the referential language of “culture”, frequently understood in terms of national allegory or hegemonic structures, is missing. For Réda Bensmaïa, Algerian writers at the time of independence were confronted with the impossibility of writing in a national or standard language not co-opted by colonial rule, and the absence of a public or community of speakers who would read the said work:

Not only were ‘products’ (or producers) lacking but so was the actual terrain where such products could come into being and take on meaning—the material and objective conditions for the existence of a public, a public sphere. And so at the time independence, cultural problems were never posed in the abstract or universal terms of expression and production, but always, necessarily, in the regional and concrete terms of territorialisation or reterritorialisation using the fragmentary material, cultural, and spiritual elements the country had inherited so as to create a new geopolitics.⁶⁴

⁶³ This is a crude way of personifying Deleuze and Guattari’s taxonomy of languages, but explains the point well.

⁶⁴ Réda Bensmaïa, *Experimental Nations: Or, the Invention of the Maghreb*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press 2003), p.13.

In the context of Algeria's soon-to-be independence, these material and objective conditions consisted in a constricted or heavily segmented terrain that was at once linguistic/ incorporeal and spatial/corporeal:

Culturally, religiously, and linguistically, French Algeria was rigidly segregated, though not in the way that South Africa was during the apartheid regime. There were no special places reserved for Muslim or French on public transport. Instead, French Algeria was crisscrossed by a series of invisible barriers which could not be transgressed [...] The main streets of the European quarters of Algiers, with their wide tree-lined boulevards, were particularly elegant. Yet not a stone's throw from the grand façades was a totally different world, the world of the casbah with its overcrowded housing and tiny trap-like streets.⁶⁵

Bensmaïa's notion of an Algerian *geopolitics* is based on a relationship of mutual presupposition between the material and the cultural, where each intersects with the other in a machinic rather than determining manner. The term is adapted from Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the "assemblage" as way of thinking social organisation that has direct application to the postcolonial situation even if it wasn't their original intention.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, accounting for this intermingling of the material and immaterial, the way in which the apparently symbolic role of language "bleeds into" the physical and corporeal structure of reality by way of the order-word will lead Deleuze and Guattari to significantly expand upon the taxonomy of languages they briefly sketch out in *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*. If the vernacular, vehicular, referential and mythical modes of language are the molar aggregates or sets of order-words active in any given language, in a *A Thousand Plateaus* these modes are further elaborated as elements as a mixed semiotics that *also* includes non-linguistic features such as bodies, objects, institutions and architectures. Hence there are machinic assemblages of production and "collective assemblages" of enunciation that are (as we have seen) social

⁶⁵ Martin Evans and John Phillips, *Algeria: Anger of the Dispossessed*, (New Haven: Yale University Press 2007), p.39

⁶⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.94.

before they are individuated.⁶⁷ As a mixed semiotics comprising both material interactions and transmissions of force between physical objects, bodies or things, as well as the “incorporeal transformations” or meanings “expressed” by those interactions, the concept of assemblage provides Deleuze and Guattari with an escape route out of the second of their postulates of linguistics: that language can be studied as an internally-consistent system (or “abstract machine”) that relies on no external factors in order to function.⁶⁸

In their introduction, Deleuze and Guattari gesture towards an understanding of the book as an assemblage, rather than a mimicry or mimesis of the world, but the concept receives its fullest elaboration in the final passages of Plateau 3 “On the Geology of Morals”, extending into Plateau 4 “Postulates of Linguistics” and ending up in Plateau 5 “On Several Regimes of Signs”.⁶⁹ Concentrating primarily on the middle of these three, Deleuze and Guattari’s use of the Danish linguist Louis Hjelmslev’s alternative to the signifier-signified binary (as forms of *expression* and forms of *content*) provides us with a map to the notion of geoliterature—that is, how literary works both engage in and subtract themselves from a given territory. Or, how literature weaves in between the incorporeal transformations enacted on bodies by order-words, redistributing the sense or meaning given to assemblages of bodies, affects, institutions, objects, and so on, along a line of flight. The work of Nabile Farès will be particularly instructive here, for the way in which his novel *Exile and Helplessness* (2012/1976) confronts the impossibility of Algerian identity, where to write is to plug into the assemblages’ colonisation.⁷⁰ Exactly how to do this is not given in advance, but requires experimentation. The novel is an open assemblage connected to its outside rather than a hermetically sealed object, where “to create or recreate a terrain, to define

⁶⁷ Ibid. p.93.

⁶⁸ Ibid. p.94-95.

⁶⁹ Ibid. p.12.

⁷⁰ C.f Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*: “[Kafka] is a political author, prophet of the future world, because he has two poles that he will know how to unify in a completely new assemblage: far from being a writer withdrawn into his room, Kafka finds that his room offers him a double flux, that of a bureaucrat with a great future ahead of him, plugged into real assemblages that are in the process of coming into shape, and that of a nomad who is involved in fleeing things in the most contemporary way and who plugs into socialism, anarchism, social movements.” p.41.

something like a national trait, is an act of reterritorialization” that must remain incomplete as the text encounters new contexts, new readers and new social assemblages.⁷¹ The role of the reader, therefore, is not to create value judgements or interpretations that exist for all time, but precisely to *encounter* the book-as-assemblage by repeating it in new historical circumstances—connecting it to new political, philosophical and historical assemblages that might be made stutter or break down.⁷²

This indeterminacy is key to the novel’s engagement with the way in which bodies (understood in the widest possible sense to include non-human bodies) and territories become organised such that they express the incorporeal attributes of social, historical, religious, political or cultural aggregates. The problem for the Algerian novel, as Réda Bensmaïa argues, lies in selecting which elements of the assemblage to force to take flight, which order-words to detach from their referents:

But which elements were to be used to do this? The forgotten past? The ruins of popular memory? Folklore? Tradition? None of these carried with it enough force and cohesion to allow it to be a stable anchor for a national culture worthy of the name. Furthermore, believing in the possibility of a reterritorialisation through folklore, the past, tradition, or religion, would mean believing in the *sub specie aeternitatis* existence of a norm or an essence of an Algerian people on whom 135 years of colonialism had absolutely no impact.⁷³

Breaking down, reterritorializing, or naming a territory—assembling—never happens *ex nihilo*, but instead needs to be synthesised from within the elements of colonial Algeria that overdetermine, striate and otherwise ensure the impossibility of writing or speaking “as an Algerian” whilst facing up to the equal impossibility of

⁷¹ Bensmaïa *Experimental Nations*, p.13.

⁷² This is key to Deleuze’s longstanding interest in the relation between literature and medicine—both of which operate by critical and ‘clinical’ procedures and which cast the artist as a physician of culture, in the Nietzschean mould. See Gilles Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco, (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press 1997; Paris: Les Editions de Minuet 1993).

⁷³ Bensmaïa, *Experimental Nations* p.13.

not writing.⁷⁴ The impossibility of not writing is the effect of the cramped conditions, the overdetermined nature of the colonised, the crisscrossed lines of affiliation that fix Lakhdar to his seat, the encounter with the order-word, that demand the creation of a line of flight: “*something* in the world forces us to think”.⁷⁵

Reading Nabile Farès’ *Exile and Helplessness* along representational or hermeneutic lines is a particularly difficult task—the novel’s structure is even more fragmented than Yacine’s work. There are no characters in the conventional sense and the narrative often mutates into prose-poetry (for lack of a better description of Farès’ truncated language). Better is the concept of assemblage for allowing the reader to “think with” Farès’ text than forcing interpretation (Marxist, psychoanalytic, or otherwise) onto it. In this way the assemblage acts as a relay between text, reader, and world which disorganises the unity of those identities in order to ask what it *does* and not what it means. Deleuze and Guattari’s comparison of the assemblage to a synthesizer is an apt way of apprehending the way representational or subjectivist ways of encountering the text are placed into variation, pulverised, or otherwise redistributed in the course of reading it.⁷⁶

Borrowing from Louis Hjelmslev’s non-Saussurean semiotics, Deleuze and Guattari’s assemblage has four components: substance of content; form of content; substance of expression; and form of expression. These replace the binary signifier-signified in favour of a double articulation of form and content which they apply to several regimes of signs beyond the linguistic. Collectively the double articulation of form and content can be expressed as a “Hjelmslev net” and is one of *A Thousand Plateaus*’ notorious abstract machines—abstract because it exists in several locales,

⁷⁴ C.f. Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*: “Kafka marks the impasse that bars access to writing for the Jews of Prague and turns their literature into something impossible—the impossibility of not writing, the impossibility of writing in German, the impossibility of writing otherwise”. p.16

⁷⁵ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (London: Continuum 2004; Paris: Presses Universitaires de France 1967), p.176. Emphasis added.

⁷⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*: “A synthesizer places all the parameters in continuous variation, gradually making ‘fundamentally heterogenous elements turn into each other in the same way’. The moment this conjunction occurs there is a common matter. It is only at this point one reaches the abstract machine, the diagram, or the assemblage. The synthesizer has replaced judgement, and matter has replaced the figure or formed substance”. p.121. Translation modified.

machinic because it organises and distributes elements on physical strata in a way that is absolutely non-symbolic and non-representational. Abstraction here is not opposed to concrete (as it was, for example, in Moretti's abstract models). It is not a metaphor.⁷⁷

Where the relation between signifier and signified is arbitrary (signs have no direct relation to things they signify) the relation between expression and content is *horizontal*. Expression and content are doubly articulated as the two directions which formed matter takes in the world. There is no essential difference between speech (*parole*) and writing (*langue*) for Deleuze and Guattari, simply differences in contents (phonemes, sound waves, inscriptions, paper, or screens) which become expressed in forms they mutually presuppose (voice, rhetoric, enunciation, the book, text or pamphlet and so on). Content and expression are Hjelmslev's way of understanding how matter comes to be overcoded and organised into larger aggregates or metastable wholes. He adds a fifth term (*purport*) which loosely corresponds to unformed matter or chaotic flows of matter-energy which Deleuze and Guattari term the plane of consistency. From unformed matter (such as all the possible combinations of sounds made by the body's organs of speech) content selects substances (specific sounds or phonemes) that together form productive aggregates (recognisable speech):

In one of the two entities that are functives of the sign function, namely the content, the sign function institutes a form, the content-form, which from the point of the purport is arbitrary and which can be explained only by the sign function and obviously solidarity with it [...] expression and content [...] are each defined only oppositively and relatively, as mutually opposed functives of one and the same function.⁷⁸

If the content-form can be said to look "inwards" towards the elements and partial-objects of matter-energy, the form of expression looks "outwards" as the sensible wholes expressed by those contents functioning together. The form expressed by

⁷⁷ Ibid. p.48.

⁷⁸ Louis Hjelmslev, *Prologmena to a Theory of Language*, (Madison: Wisconsin University Press 1961 [1943]), p.54.

my phonemes and utterances is the recognisable “English language” even if underlying that functional whole is a continuum of differences such as region, dialect, accent and so on:

Precisely the same thing can be observed in the other of the two entities that are functives of the sign-function, namely the expression. [...] Just as, for example, [words for colour] or [combinations of phonemes] are subdivided differently in different languages in that each language has its own number of colour words, its own number of numbers, its own number of tenses, etc., so we can also disclose, by subtraction from a comparison of languages, zones in the phonetic sphere which are subdivided differently in different languages.⁷⁹

These zones or specific combinations of sounds form functional wholes which can be collectively expressed in the form of “the English language”/“the French language”/“the German language” even if underlying those functional wholes is a continuum of differences between each specific utterance or speech act which are the substances of those forms of expression “just as an open net casts its shadow on an undivided surface”.⁸⁰

It is worth noting that Deleuze returns to Hjelmslev’s materialist semiotics in his later work on Foucault (in a rare instance in which Deleuze’s terminology is largely the same as his previous work). Here we get a clear example of how content and expression are not limited to systems of coding and overcoding on the linguistic strata, but are part of a larger cosmology or regime of signs which are not necessarily linguistic. In analysing Foucault’s work on disciplinary power, Deleuze argues that the forms of content of discipline are the institutions, such as prisons, whose substances are prisoners, whereas the form of expression for those institutions are the various discourses on delinquency, whose substance are medical reports, examinations, behaviour records, timetables and so on:

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid. p.57.

Form [of content] is prison and the substance is those who are locked up, the prisoners. [...] Form [of expression] is penal law and the substance is 'delinquency' in so far as it is the object of statements. Just as penal law as a form of expression defines a field of sayability (the statements of delinquency) so prison as a form of content defines a field of place of visibility ('panopticism', that is to say a place where at any moment one can see everything without being seen).⁸¹

The double articulation of content and expression (they mutually presuppose one another) demonstrates how Deleuze's and Guattari's mixed semiotics can be deployed to analyse the ways in which social objects (such as books, novels and other literary media) can be thought of as functional wholes or assemblages which remain open to their outside in concrete historical situations or everyday uses of language without the former being reducible to the latter and vice-versa. The relation between world and text is *horizontal* rather than vertical, and doesn't rely on a reductive idealism (symbolism, metaphor, representation) in order to reduce the complexity of their interaction. This is why Deleuze and Guattari's pragmatics can be described as an *a-signifying* semiotics.

Turning back to the Algerian novel as a war-machine or assemblage which takes flight and attempts to disturb the operation of power as it defines what is sayable and who is visible, the fiction and poetry of Nabile Farès is instructive for the geoliterature I wish to theorise. In moving away from traditional narrative structure (where the contents are predetermined and only exist to be represented) Farès can be said to collapse forms of content and expression into one another so as to produce aesthetic effects and discursive forms which are not immediately recognisable or understandable to readers, Algerian or otherwise. Yet it is that moment of alienation or estrangement (where the Other stops being simply the mirror image of the White, Western subject) that I have argued is constitutive of the line of flight in world literature.

⁸¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. Séan Hand, (London: Continuum 2006; Paris: Les Editions de Minuit 1986), p.41.

In contrast to works of *minority*, which exist to represent a subordinate subject position to the majority, Farès' fictions are peculiarly homeless. Despite the fact that his writing can be read under the sign of a number of identity categories ("French", "Algerian", "Berber") his novels and poetry are animated by the figure of the *exile* as a linguistic, narrational and poetic refrain:

Des vies / Nos Voix / entendues / pénétrantes / veines / vivantes / animées / chaudes / du voyage / végétal / l'arbré? / Comment pourrait-il être détruit / ou / dénoncé / dans l'Exil / des / pouvoir / et / des choses / L'arbre est parcouru / de mots, phrases idées qui expriment plusieurs équivalences entre les volontés de vivre, ou, de mourir, ou, plus simplement se taire: fuir le langage, et, l'amour, dans la rivalité du temps, de l'espace, accomplir le non-sens, ou, lorsque la crise a lieu, dire l'irréductible espoir de maintenir le vrai dans l'exiguité même de la matière et du champ.

*[Our lives / Our voices / heard / penetrating / veins / alive / animated / warm / from the vegetal / journey / the tree? / How could it be destroyed / or / denounced / in the Exile of powers / and / things / The tree is shot through with words, phrases, ideas that express several equivalence between the wills to live, or to die, or, more basically just to keep quiet: to flee language, and love, in the rivalry of time and space, to achieve nonsense, or, when the crisis arrives, to pronounce the irreducible hope of holding on to truth in the very meagreness of matter and the soil.]*⁸²

From the perspective of the narrative, this passage takes place as the novel's pseudo-protagonist, Mokrane, is staring at a mural opposite his bedside. The words of the mural are italicised in the text (also reproduced in the translation) but the syntax remains fragmented after the slogans on the wall have supposedly stopped being narrated—blurring the boundary between what is reported speech, Mokrane's internal monologue, and the narrator's own speech. The poetic interplay between the figure of the tree and vegetal or rhizomatic life, as well as the

⁸² Nabile Farès, *Exile and Helplessness*, trans. Peter Thompson, (New Orleans: Dialogos 2012; Paris: Maspero 1976), p.28 [36]. Translation modified. References to the English translation will hereafter be given in brackets following the original.

validation of nonsense as literary style, are only the most obvious comparisons to Deleuze's conceptual world. More significant are the stylistic flattening of speech and inscription (*langue* and *parole*) and the utilisation of free indirect discourse. I will return to the concept of free indirect style in my reading of Assia Djebar's *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade*, but here I want to register its importance for Hjelmslev and Deleuze/Guattari's understanding of the literary assemblage. The notion that subjects are spoken by language is a familiar structuralist trope, but it receives a new inflection in Deleuze and Guattari's take-up of Hjelmslev's linguistics, where, as we have already seen, a continuum or field of difference (purport) underlies all language use. Every speech act contains within it every possible iteration or variation of that speech act (hence Kafka's "I swear" which 'travels' across different contexts and terrain, or Deleuze and Guattari's interest in the paronomasia or associative phonemic play by schizophrenics).⁸³ This means there are, strictly speaking, no individual enunciations only collective ones through which a subject position is spoken of:

There is no individual enunciation. There is not even a subject of enunciation. [...] The social character of enunciation is intrinsically founded only if one succeeds in demonstrating how enunciation in itself implies collective assemblages. It then becomes clear that the statement is individuated, and enunciation subjectified, only to the extent that an impersonal collective assemblage requires it and determines it to be so. It is for this reason that indirect discourse, especially 'free' indirect discourse, is of exemplary value: there are no clear, distinctive contours, what comes first is not an insertion of variously individuated statements, or an interlocking of different subjects of enunciation, but a collective assemblage resulting in the determination of relative subjectification proceedings, or assignations of individuality.⁸⁴

⁸³ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane, (London: Continuum 2004; Paris: Les Editions de Minuit 1972), p.25.

⁸⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.88.

The formula might be expressed in a modification of Cartesian dogma: I am spoken of therefore I am. The set of order words active in a language, which affect incorporeal transformations on bodies and things (contents), can now be thought of as a collective assemblage of enunciation corresponding to an assemblage of material processes—whose interaction and mutual presupposition constitute a regime of signs.

Rather than a definite or individuated character, Mokrane's subjectivity is precarious and indeterminate. In contrast to the rich and sometimes impressionistic passages of poetry in the novel, the narration is often sparse and impoverished—leading to the sense that Mokrane's interiority is not really of literary interest to the work, or at least is not sentimentalised as the object of the story. Lying on his bed, Mokrane is as trapped or transfixed as Lakhdar in his train carriage (or Gregor Samsa in his room):

Il repose le verre de café sur la table qui sert à tout, travailler, manger, quelquefois dormir, jouer aux cartes, aux dominos, ou aux dames. Mokrane a peur, semble observer l'intérieur de lui-même, les perspectives immédiates de rencontres, de salut [...] Il étend le bras gauche vers la table, prends un paquet disques bleu vieux d'une semaine—celle qu'il a passée dans sa chambre, au lit—le frappe au cul, prend la cigarette qui sort des rangées de filtres blanc. [...] A la troisième bouffée, il avale, sent la fumée accomplir les mêmes trajets corporels, et, pour ainsi dire, visibles, que ceux accomplir quelques instants plus tôt par le café.

[He sets the glass of coffee down on his all-purpose table, his working, eating, sometimes sleeping table, table for cards, dominos, checkers. Mokrane is afraid, seems to observe his very interior, the immediate prospects of meetings, of health. [...] He extends his left arm towards the table, takes a pack of Disque Bleus that is a week old—the week he spent in bed—raps its bottom, plucks out the cigarette that emerges from the rows of white filters. [...] At the third puff, he inhales, feels the smoke running

over the same tracks in his body, almost visible ones, that were invaded a few minutes earlier by the coffee.]⁸⁵

Body and text are crisscrossed by lines of deterritorialization, where expression (Mokrane's subjectivity, the "body" of the narrative) is in danger of collapsing into contents (matter-flows of coffee, tobacco, blood, oxygen and language-flows of free-indirect style) or where expression becomes detached from its content (Mokrane's own life, the novel's plot) and takes off on an a-signifying line of flight.⁸⁶

This distinguishes *Exile and Helplessness* from the sometimes reductive way in which peripheral works are assigned allegorical or representational labour by theorists of World Literature.⁸⁷ The novel could be read as coming from a double or folded peripheral as emerging from the Kabylie region of Algeria of which the Petite Kabylie or Berber are one ethnic minority with a distinct language (Berber) and cultural history apart from that of Algeria or the Maghreb, which at the time of publication stood in a colonial or minority position to French sovereignty.⁸⁸ But Farès turns the refusal of this allegorical or representational labour into a political and aesthetic strategy based on an ethics of exile: "This is why / Exiles and Discoveries / Powers and Renunciations / Fatherlands and Depravities / Everything is heaped upon us / Like worn-out clothes / and here we are, wanderers / —having become wanderers—many miles down the road".⁸⁹ For Bensmaïa, the exile or, better, the exilic as a pre-personal phenomenon, is opposed both to the state *and* to the migrant (because the migrant is one whose deterritorialisation is reterritorialised in an adoptive community and thus returns to a majoritarian mould):

⁸⁵ Nabile Farès, *Exile and Helplessness*, p.27 [35].

⁸⁶ "[In minor literature] it is expression which precedes contents, whether to prefigure the rigid forms into which contents will flow or to make them take flight along lines of escape or transformation". Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, p.85.

⁸⁷ Although more recent works are substantially more nuanced on this point. C.f Warwick Research Collective, *Combined and Uneven Development: Towards a New Theory of World-Literature*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press 2015).

⁸⁸ c.f. Reda Bensmaïa, 'The Exiles of Nabile Farès: Or, How to Become a Minority', trans. Jennifer Curtiss Gage, *Yale French Studies*, 83:2 (1999), pp.44-70.

⁸⁹ Farès, *Exile and Helplessness*, pp.19-20 [15-16].

What interests Farès is not belonging to a minority whose values, cultural patrimony, and political interests he ardently defends (this agenda is the legitimate aim of writers such as Mammeri, Feraoun, or Memmi) but rather using this minority status as a pretext for setting in motion a 'war machine'. In radical opposition to the 'minority' as an already constituted *ensemble* or *State*, this 'war machine' (inseparable from a 'writing machine') unleashes the 'minoritarian' as a *becoming* or a *process*.⁹⁰

The concept of the "writing machine" which Bensmaïa here adapts from Deleuze and Guattari's encounter with Kafka, extends in several directions in *A Thousand Plateaus*—one of which being the assemblage. As an assemblage, writing loses its signifying or representational function in *Exile and Helplessness* and instead becomes a process of reengineering, where the narrative seeks a suitable form of content (Islam, the Arabic language, Algerian nationalism, French, Berber, Kabyle identity) suitable for a form of expression (the novel) which constantly escapes and slips away from those categories—like plugging into different modules on a synthesizer. But ultimately the line of flight escapes these combinations in favour of a becoming-minor of the Maghrebian territory in which the periphery becomes disengaged from its oppositional stance to the centre.⁹¹ The Maghreb, a movement, instead becomes a bloc or mixed semiotics of forms and contents, an a-signifying distribution of elements of the assemblage:

Autour, existe ce vaste pays que les constructions les plus vastes, et, le plus digestives, ne peuvent masquer, ce vaste pays où le ciel trace des auréoles de bonheur, et, de vie, au-dessus du souffle miraculeux de la mer, et, du vent.

[All around this vast land exists, which the vastest and most devouring constructions cannot hide, this vast country where the skies traces aureoles

⁹⁰ Bensmaïa, 'The Exiles of Nabile Farès: Or, How to Become a Minority', p.55.

⁹¹ This is sometimes registered ironically in Farès' work, where 'the Maghreb' is not the geographical region but a movement or process of transformation which undermines its actual relation to territory. 'Maghreb' simply means 'West' in Arabic, deterritorialising the notion of 'Western' in English usage, but sharing something in common with Deleuze's fascination for Anglo-American writers that 'take off West, on the road'.

of happiness, and of life, above the miraculous breath of the sea, and the wind.]⁹²

“*Terre*”, “*terre*”, “*pays*”: the text subjects the French language to deterritorialisation, where the form of expressions (*Terre* meaning “the Earth” and *terre* or land) become disarticulated. A deterritorialisation where terrestrials are those assemblages of animal and human, collective enunciations, traces and journeys made in exile from a country which is no longer reducible to the state, the people, or a subject. *Exile and Helplessness* is a map to this becoming, which engages in the creation “of a new Earth and a people that do not exist yet”.⁹³

In what follows I will extend this cartography of a becoming-other that consists in nothing less than a geoliterature and finds its ethics in the figure of the exile. In so doing, Assia Djebar’s *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade* provides us with the final component of Deleuze and Guattari’s materialist semiotics to which I have already alluded: free-indirect style conceived as a linguistic operator, a metamorphosis-machine that forms a line of flight.

2.4. Indirect discourse, or, how to write a scream: Assia Djebar’s *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade*.

Thus far I have drawn a general topology of geoliterature consisting of a materialist semiotics of forces, which is doubly articulated along the axes of content and expression. In line with Deleuze’s broader metaphysics, there is no pre-linguistic or originary void (as in the Lacanian real) which the symbolic can only fail to represent. Instead there are several regimes of signs (including but not limited to the linguistic) which are constantly stratifying and organising a self-differentiating being-in-becoming variously named by the concepts body-without-organs, plane of consistency, or plane of immanence. Now it remains to uncover how books-as-

⁹² Farès, *Exile and Helplessness*, p.17 [22]. Translation modified.

⁹³ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p.108.

assemblages work to escape those stratifications or lines which criss-cross them and “plug” them into the various social assemblages they are situated within. This leads us to Assia Djébar’s *L’Amour, La Fantasia* (1985, translated as *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade* 1993) which both draws upon and departs substantially from earlier Algerian writing responding to colonisation and the war for independence.

Existing approaches to the novel revolve around the twin figures of silence and aphasia—those pre-symbolic voids or absences I have worked to dispel.⁹⁴ As such, reading the novel as geoliterature goes against much of the postcolonial criticism that has encountered the novel thus far.⁹⁵ *Fantasia* is constructed as a narrative counterpoint between a fictionalised autobiography of Djébar’s own life and experiences, and historical sections which transcribe from various sources and documents the French invasion of Algeria in 1830. The way in which Djébar uses silence as, paradoxically, a means of expression, centres on the dichotomy between oral Arabic cultures, voice and speech, and its domination by the written (French) word. For Mildred Mortimer, Djébar’s novel recovers the capacity of speech for Algerian women in order to “give voice to surviving heroines, the *porteuses de feu* of the Algerian revolution, and allows them to tell their own stories”.⁹⁶ Djébar’s giving voice to the silent women of Algerian history works, as Soheila Ghaussy concludes:

by deliberately blending fiction and experience, fictionality and language, and especially by gendering writing (*écriture*) as male and orality (*Kaalam*) as female, moreover associating the former with French and the latter with

⁹⁴ As Simone Bignall and Lorna Burns argue, the Hegelian model much postcolonial theory is built upon belongs to an entirely different philosophy of difference from which Deleuze’s own Bergsonian metaphysics should be disarticulated. See Simone Bignall, *Postcolonial Agency: Critique and Constructivism*, (London: Bloomsbury 2010), Lorna Burns, *Contemporary Caribbean Writing and Deleuze: Literature Between Postcolonialism and Post-Continental Philosophy*, (London: Bloomsbury 2012).

⁹⁵ See Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Acting Bits/Identity Talk”, *Critical Inquiry* 18:4 (1992), 770–773.

⁹⁶ Mildred Mortimer, ‘Language and Space in the Fiction of Assia Djébar’, *Research in African Literatures*, 19:3 (1988), 301-311 (p.303).

Arabic, Djebbar creates subtle and complicated links between the 'feminine' spheres of oral languages and the 'male' domain of writing.⁹⁷

Whilst I don't want to dispute these feminist readings, I do wish to contend that the dichotomy between orality and writing in the novel, with the latter dominating the former, often ends up investing more in Djebbar's own life than in the work itself. That is to say, it risks reducing the text to a symbolic screen which misses the fact that the opposition in the text is not so much between orality and writing as between the written transcription of oral history (writing oral Arabic testimony back into the language of the coloniser) and the written history of French conquest which, counter-intuitively, *fictionalises* itself as a humanitarian endeavour. That is to say, the novel's real formal relation is between *writing* and writing.

I will to take a different approach to reading the text which, following Deleuze and Guattari's materialist semiotics, erases the distinction between speech (*parole*) and writing (*langue*) where the former is considered a more authentic or primary site of enunciation, and the latter a purely signifying or ideal realm where the meanings of enunciations freely circulate. The central characters of the novel are not Djebbar herself as the autobiographical narrator, nor the Algerian women whose testimony she rescues from their imposed exile, but rather zones of indetermination *between the two* where writing is at once singular and collective: a collective assemblage of enunciation. The key figure here—the diagram or function by which the novel becomes an a-signifying machine or assemblage—is the scream or cry, as opposed to silence and absence. My reading of the novel will allow me to introduce the third element in the materialist semiotics I have culled from Deleuze and Guattari's postulates of linguistics—the notion of free indirect style they take from the Russian linguist V.N Volosinov (a pseudonym they attribute to Bakhtin) and which they take as the basis for their theory of collective assemblages of enunciation.

⁹⁷ Soheila Ghaussy, 'A Stepmother Tongue: Feminine Writing in Assia Djebbar's *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade*', *World Literature Today* 68:3 (1994), 457-462 (p.458).

In a latter section of the novel, entitled “Voice”, whilst recounting the oral testimony of an Algerian woman who joined the partisans (whom Djébar ironically renames *maquis* after the French resistance during World War Two), the narrator reflects on her own role as historical interlocuter:

Je ne m’avance ni en diseuse, ni en scribeuse. Sur l’aire de la dépossession, je voudrais pouvoir chanter.

Corps nu—puisque je me dépouille des souvenirs d’enfance—, je me veux porteuse d’offrandes, mains tendues vers qui, vers les Seigneurs de la guerre d’hier, ou vers les filettes rôdeuses qui habitent le silence succèdent aux batailles... Et j’offre quoi, sinon nœuds d’écorce de la mémoire griffée, je cherche quoi, peut-être la douve où se noient les mots de meurtrissure.

[I do not claim here to be either a story-teller or a scribe. On the territory of dispossession, I would that I could sing.

I would cast off my childhood memories and advance naked, bearing offerings, hands outstretched to whom?—to the Lords of yesterday’s war, or the young girls who lay in hiding and who now inhabit the silence that succeeds the battles... And what are my offerings? Only handfuls of husks, culled from memory, what do I seek? Maybe the brook where the wounding words are drowned.]⁹⁸

The notion of recovering the lost voices—or those which were stolen—from out of the history of Algeria’s dispossession is at once desired and revealed to be impossible. There is no way in which the narrator’s French can capture the Arabic testimony of her subject that doesn’t come back empty handed, bearing only husks rather than the full voice of memory.⁹⁹ Since those voices the narrator wishes to channel or summon can only be spoken of *as victims*, it is their victimhood which

⁹⁸ Assia Djébar, *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade*, (New Hampshire: Heinemann 1993; Paris: Editions Jean-Claude Lattès 1985), p.142 [p.202]. References to the English translation will hereafter be given in square brackets following the original.

⁹⁹ Emily Apter has critiqued World Literature from the standpoint of translation theory, and I respond to these arguments in my conclusion. See Emily Apter, *Against World Literature: On The Politics of Untranslatability*, (London: Verso 2013).

must come back even when one attempts to overwrite the words of the coloniser. The page remains a palimpsest in which Djebbar's narrator can never fully recover her subjects: "Ta voix s'est prise au piège; mon parler français la déguise sans l'habiller. A peine si je frôle l'ombre de tons pas!"; ["I have captured your voice, disguised it with my French without clothing it. I barely brush the shadow of your footsteps!"].¹⁰⁰ Djebbar's novel which, like those of Kateb Yacine and Nabile Farres, is written in French, finds itself bound to a history it wishes to escape but lacks the means of expression to do so:

Cherifa! Je désirais recréer ta course: dans le champ isolé, l'arbre se dresse tragiquement devant toi qui crains les chacals. Tu traverses ensuite les villages, entre des gardes, amenée jusqu'au camp de prisonniers qui grossit chaque année [...] Lets mots que j'ai cru te donner s'enveloppent de la même serge de deuil que ceux de Bosquet ou de Saint-Arnaud. En vérité, ils s'écrivent à travers ma main, puisque je consens à cette bâtardise, au seul métissage que la foi ancestrale ne condamne pas: celui de la langue et non celui du sang.

[Charifa! I wanted to re-create your flight: there, in the isolated field, the tree appears before you when you are scared of the jackals. Next you are driven through the villages, surrounded by guards, taken to the prison camp where every year more prisoners arrive [...] The words that I thought to put in your mouth shrouded in the same mourning garb as those of [the French documenters of the war] Bosquet or Saint-Arnaud. Actually, it is they who are writing to each other, using my hand, since I condone this bastardy, the only cross-breeding that ancestral beliefs do not condemn: that of language, not of blood.]¹⁰¹

Over the course of the novel, the narrator discovers that the absence or aphasia which one confronts when searching for accounts by Algerian women of the 1830 invasion and, latterly, the war for independence, is not a blank space or void, but

¹⁰⁰ Djebbar, *L'amour, La Fantasia*, p.202 [p.142].

¹⁰¹ Djebbar, *L'amour La Fantasia*, pp.202-203 [p.142].

rather a history overrun with identification and signification on their behalf. The task of the narrator (who is less a cipher for Djébar than a machinic archivist or “scanner” of history) is to wrest from both oral Arabic testimony and orientalist documentary those errant utterances or traces that suggest a becoming-other than the victims of colonial violence. But such becomings do not happen “in” language, as the enunciation of a speaking/writing body, but as those movements which are imperceptible to language—an a-signifying rupture. For both Djébar and Deleuze, the desert (in this case the physical desert the Algerian partisans retreat to, as well as the “desert” of historical testimony by female voices) is “*peopled*” but the people are not within history.¹⁰² They are yet-to-come. The novel acts as an assemblage or machine which seeks to extract from the history of coloniser and colonised a differential becoming that might escape such a determination: a collective assemblage of enunciation. The primary method through which the novel constructs this collective assemblage is free indirect discourse: those enunciations which escape the bodies which emit them and take flight, producing incorporeal transformations that are not pre-determined by the order-word.

If the double articulation of forms of content and forms of expression make up the two horizontal axes of Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of assemblage (arranged not hierarchically as signifier and signified, but in mutual presupposition) then its vertical axis can be considered the process of de-/re-territorialisation. The three axes or dimensions can be plotted, at the risk of simplifying their movement, so as to show the zone or desert at their base, where content and expression become indistinguishable as chaotic matter-energy, which Hjelmslev calls *purport* and Deleuze and Guattari refer to in *A Thousand Plateaus* as the plane of consistency, taking over from *Anti-Oedipus*’ body-without-organs and preceding the plane of immanence from *What is Philosophy?*

¹⁰² The desert as a space of becoming or transformation is a perennial aesthetic figure for Deleuze: “We are deserts, but populated by tribes, flora and fauna. We pass out time in ordering these tribes, arranging them in other ways, getting rid of some and encouraging others to prosper. And all these clans, all these crowds, do not undermine the desert, which is our very ascesis; on the contrary they inhabit it, they pass through it, over it.” Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues II*, p.9.

Language becomes, in this configuration, one of “several regimes of signs” (the title given to the plateau immediately following The Postulates of Linguistics) which can contain linguistic and non-linguistic elements.¹⁰³ The order-word, as the primary unit of language conceived as heterogenous system in constant variation, effects incorporeal transformations at the level of formed matters (i.e. expressions and contents) which contribute to their territorialisation as perceptible objects or assemblages. Human bodies are assemblages of contents (such as flesh, bone, nervous systems) as well being that which is expressed as an incorporeal attribute of their functional unity (“a” body).¹⁰⁴ Frankenstein’s monster, despite being partially composed of the correct contents, struggles to attain the sense of embodiment that the order-word “I” withholds from him (where he would otherwise become expressible or perceptible as a person). The order-word therefore has a transverse side, or *de*-territorialising mode, which Deleuze and Guattari refer to as “pass-words” (somewhat confusingly, seeing as they don’t necessarily mean a different category of linguistic elements) which collapse expressions and contents into one-another such that they become imperceptible to their social, cultural and historical reality.¹⁰⁵ All assemblages are therefore in a constant process of de- and re-territorialisation, rather than steady-states, and the judgements handed down by order-words are always contingent, partial, or open to breakdown:

There are pass-words beneath order-words. Words that pass, words that are components of passage, whereas order-words mark stoppages or organised, stratified compositions. A single thing or word undoubtedly has this two-fold nature: it is necessary to extract one from the other—to transform the compositions of order into components of passage.¹⁰⁶

The book-as-assemblage, rather than a symbolic or mimetic object, is a machine for transforming the components of order into components of passage. This is how I

¹⁰³ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* p.123

¹⁰⁴ Badiou also calls this functional or expressible unity the ‘count-as-one’ of any situation or multiplicity. See Alain Badiou, *Being and Event*, trans. Oliver Feltham, (London: Continuum 2006; Paris: Editions de Seuil 1988).

¹⁰⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.122.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

choose to read Djébar's novel from the perspective of Deleuze and Guattari's pragmatics—which I have extrapolated into a geoliterature of becomings, flights and transformations set against the despotism of meaning and interpretation. The becoming which Djébar's novel enacts occurs through the displacement of order-words by pass-words—free-indirect discourse in place of the naming and speaking “on behalf of” others enacted by the historical archive.¹⁰⁷ Here the scream or cry works as an a-signifying figure, in place of the imposed choice between identity or silence and against which it refuses both.

Djébar's use of the archive is paradigmatic of the way in which Deleuze and Guattari insist books are assemblages with the world, as fully social, rather than simply mimetic or symbolic objects that pass judgement on the world. The historical archive becomes itself a kind of *fictioning* machine, from which Djébar's text is *subtracted*.¹⁰⁸ The historical chapters of the novel, which are recovered from various accounts of the French invasion of Algeria, stress the trans-individual nature of this fictioning; the way in which history occludes as much as it produces the sense of events. The archive is a writing-machine that Djébar “plugs into” in the manner Deleuze and Guattari argue Kafka “plugs into” the socio-juridical apparatus of his social assemblage.¹⁰⁹ But this writing-machine has the structure of delirium:

Une fièvre scripturaire a saisi en particulier les officiers supérieurs. Ils publient leurs souvenirs dès l'années suivante; les chef d'état-major est le premier, d'autres peu après feront comme lui. Jusque vers 1835, dix-neuf officiers de l'armée de terre, quatre ou cinq de la marine, contribueront à cette littérature.

[The senior officers in particular are infected by a veritable *scribbleomania*. They start to publish their memoirs the following year; the chief of general

¹⁰⁷ Deleuze (to Foucault): “You were the first to show us [...] there is an indignity in speaking for others”. See Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze “Intellectuals and Power” in Michel Foucault, *Language: Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. D. Bouchard, Trans. Donald Bouchard and Sherry Simon, (Ithica: Cornell University Press 1977), pp.205-217.

¹⁰⁸ This is roughly analogous to Deleuze's argument in *Difference and Repetition*, that simulacra are ‘fully real’ rather than quasi-ontological beings. This puts him at odds with the thrust of much of the ‘postmodernist’ canon to which he is (incorrectly) compared.

¹⁰⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature*, p.41.

staff is the first, followed shortly afterwards by others. By 1835 or thereabouts, nineteen army officers, with four or five from the navy, have contributed to this literary output.]¹¹⁰

The accounts and documents this delirium produces effect a series of incorporeal transformations in the social body of coloniser and colonised:

Les mot lui-même, ornement pour les officiers qui le brandissent comme ils porteraient un œillet à la boutonnière, le mot deviendra l'arme par excellence. Des cohortes d'interprètes, géographes, ethnographes, linguistes, botanistes, docteurs divers et écrivains de profession s'abattront sur la nouvelle proie. Toute une pyramide d'écrits amoncelés en apophyse superfétatoire occultera la violence initiale.

[Words themselves become a decoration, flaunted by officers like the carnations they wear in their buttonholes; words will become their most effective weapons. Hordes of interpreters, geographers, ethnographers, linguists, botonists, diverse scholars and professional scribblers will swoop down on this new prey. The supererogatory protuberances of their publications will form a pyramid to hide the initial violence from view.]¹¹¹

Although I have described incorporeal transformation as a process of overcoding, they differ from biological or technical codes in the crucial respect that their outcomes are not predetermined. Biological or computer codes enact direct communication, but the incorporeal transformations enacted by the order-word are not predetermined in advance, nor are they controlled by a central processing unit (such as the individual speaker). Rather, they intermingle in bodies *indirectly*.

The claim that all discourse is indirect in origin is the source of the third element in Deleuze and Guattari's materialist semiotics: that "there is no individual enunciation. There is not even a subject of enunciation".¹¹² *Fantasia's* attempts to pin down, to circumscribe, the subject-position from which an Algerian-feminist

¹¹⁰ Djébar, *L'amour La Fantasia*, p.66 [p.44]. Emphasis added.

¹¹¹ Ibid. p.67 [p.45].

¹¹² Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.88.

subaltern might finally be able to speak is continually thwarted. As Jane Hiddlestone argues:

While Djébar strives to locate a sense of feminine specificity, the text also splits and fragments the collective identity it wants to evoke. Differences between women are as notable as similarities and the nature of their oppression is shaped by historical events in contrasting ways. Not only does language gloss over the temporal and spatial displacement of each singular being, but also the collective feminine voice hides multiple difference, contradictions and contrasts.¹¹³

In one of the novel's prolonged comparisons between acts of love and acts of war, the contradictory nature of female oppression in colonial Algeria comes to the fore. The narrator recounts an episode from her childhood in which her father has sent her mother a postcard addressed in French:

La révolution était manifeste: mon père, de sa propre écriture, et sur une carte qui allait voyager de ville en ville, qui allait passer sous tant et tant de regards masculins, y compris pour finir celui du facteur de notre village, un facteur musulman de surcroît, mon père donc avait osé écrire le nom de sa femme qu'il avait désignée à la manière occidentale: << Madame untel...>>; or, tout autochtone, pauvre ou riche, n'évoquait femme et enfants que par le biais de cette vague périphrase: << la maison >>.

The radical change in customs was apparent for all to see: my father had quite brazenly written his wife's name, in his own handwriting, on a postcard which was going to travel from one town to another, which was going to be exposed to so many masculine eyes, including eventually our village postman—a Muslim to boot—and, what is more, he had dared to refer to her in the Western manner as 'Madame So-and-So...', whereas, no local man, poor or rich, ever referred to his wife and children in any other way than by the vague periphrasis: 'the household'.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Jane Hiddlestone, *Assia Djébar: Out of Algeria*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press 2006), p.71.

¹¹⁴ Assia Djébar, *L'amour La Fantasia*, p.57 [p.37].

In contrast to the territorialising machine of the archive, the language of the coloniser in this case remains open to a reterritorialisation. The social character of the interaction, of being-seen-to-be a beloved, belies the fact that utterances are indirect before they are direct, collective before they are individuated. Belovedness exists as a virtual line or potential of utterances to become part of the assemblage “beloveds” before it is actualised in specific bodies. It is the indirectness of the utterance, the collective assemblage of its enunciation, which affects an incorporeal transformation in the body of the narrator’s mother. In a similar vein, the narrator details how her and her childhood friends are engaged in writing pen-pal letters to unknown interlocuters in other parts of Algeria and further afield:

Les jeunes filles cloîtrées écrivaient; écrivaient des lettres; des lettres à des hommes; à des hommes aux quatre coins du monde; du monde arabe naturellement.

Letres d’Irak, de Syrie, du Liban, de Libye, de Tunisie, d’étudiants arabes à Paris ou à Londre. Ces missives parvenaient de partout! Envoyées par des correspondants choisis dans les annonces d’un magazine féminin largement répandu, à l’époque, dans les harems.

[These girls, though confined to their house, were writing; were writing letters; letters to men; to men in the four corners of the world; of the Arab world, naturally.

And the letters came back from far and wide: letters from Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Lybia, Tunisia, from Arab students in Paris or London. Letters sent by pen-pals chosen from adverts appearing in a women’s magazine with a circulation at the time in the harems.]¹¹⁵

These small acts of subversion which, by disguising the name of the sender, the narrator’s childhood friends successfully hide from patriarchal eyes (including the eldest’s Arabic-speaking father) become, in retrospect, the mode of composition by

¹¹⁵ Ibid. p.21 [p.11]

which the novel will seek to deterritorialise the French language as a means of expression for Algerian women. The doubly-oppressed position of Algerian women in respect to French occupation and the patriarchy which both preceded and continued throughout it, leads to a contradiction in which writing in French is both subjection to, and means of undermining, their own oppression. But this relies upon the language being open ended, its discursive arrangements distributed rather than hierarchically structured as a series of abstracts or constants. This makes Djébar's style in *L'amour La Fantasia*, her mode of narration as a form of collective autobiography for a people that (from the perspective of the archive) do not exist, in a strange correspondence with Deleuze and Guattari's literary-philosophical style in *A Thousand Plateaus*. That book also contains sheets or plateaus of the past between which lines of flight escape, traverse and territorialise.¹¹⁶ The centrality of indirect discourse to language's incorporeal transformations is what enables creative sabotage against the striated and dominant forms of its usage. Deleuze and Guattari's *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* can be read in this way, a series of aberrant readings of the history of philosophy, literature, linguistics, geography and so on, in the same manner that Djébar's novel inserts itself into the historical archive as a machine of deterritorialisation, or, "war machine".¹¹⁷

The notion of free-indirect discourse as the poetics by which a writing machine plugs into its social apparatuses is taken from the Russian linguist V.N Volosinov (whom Deleuze and Guattari, perhaps correctly, take to be a pseudonym of Bakhtin). In Volosinov/Bakhtin's *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (1973)[1929], Deleuze and Guattari find a proto-diagram of collective assemblages of enunciation, based on Volosinov/Bakhtin's analysis of free indirect discourse:

Any utterance, no matter how weighty and complete in and of itself, is only a movement in the continuous process of verbal communication. But that

¹¹⁶ For a more detailed discussion of Deleuze's concept of history as 'sheets of the past' or the virtual, see chapter 4.

¹¹⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.387-467.

continuous verbal communication is, in turn, itself only a moment in the continuous, all-inclusive, generative process of a given social collective.¹¹⁸

As Jean-Jacques Lecercle argues, Volosinov/Bakhtin's is an "external linguistics" that proceeds by five theses in anticipation of Deleuze and Guattari's materialist semiotics:

[1] *Langue qua* system is merely an abstraction that fails to account for the concrete reality of language; [2] Language is a process of continuous evolution which is actualised in the verbal interaction of speakers; [3] The laws of linguistic evolution are sociological, not psychological laws: they do not take individuals as their object; [4] The creativity of language cannot be grasped independently of the ideological contents and values that are involved in it; [5] The structure of verbal interaction is strictly a verbal structure.¹¹⁹

Volosinov's insistence that the speaker is already collective, is the product of a collective process in which they are "spoken by" language is familiar to the Saussurian theory of signs, but Volosinov goes further to argue that consciousness itself inheres in speech acts, as indirect discourse, rather than in the mind of a subject: "Language acquires life and historically evolves precisely here, in concrete verbal communication, and not in the abstract system of language forms, nor in the individual psyche of speakers".¹²⁰ The reliance of *langue* on what is external to it (on the non-signifying or extra-linguistic) reverses the relation between inside and outside fundamental to the bourgeois psychology of the novel (as the individual enunciation of a "great" writer). For Volosinov, the inside *is* the outside just as the narrator of Djébar's novel *is* the accumulation of rhetorical, discursive and incorporeal transformations enacted by the historical archive. She is not marked by silence, but by the cacophony of order-words which crush her under their weight.

¹¹⁸ V.N. Volosinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, trans. Ladislav Matejka and I.R. Titunik, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press 1973 [Moscow: 1929]), p.95. Original emphasis. The French edition of this text read by Deleuze and Guattari attributes the work to Bakhtin.

¹¹⁹ Jean-Jacques Lecercle, *Deleuze and Language*, (London: Routledge 2002), p.172. Original emphasis.

¹²⁰ Volosinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, p.95.

Djebar's writing machine does not proceed, therefore, simply by shining light on what is obscured, or recovering a lost history of female voices that could be read apart from those of their oppressors, but by *making cuts* in the archive. The collective assemblage of enunciation mapped by her use of free indirect style exists in between the historical accounts and oral testimony she transcribes. These cuts occur in the text, not as silence or void, but in the figure of the scream or the cry.¹²¹ The scream or cry emerges from the archive as an a-signifying breakdown in communication: as that which overcomes the body from which it originates and cannot be held in place by the archival striation of the order-word. A strategy of refusal, the scream emerges at various points throughout the novel:

Le cri, douleur pure, s'ect chargé de surprise en son tréfonds. Sa courbe se développe. Trace d'un dard échorché, il se dresse dans l'espace; il emmagasine en son nadir les nappes d'un << non >> intérieur.

[The cry, pure pain, secretes an inner core of wonderment. It soars in a swelling curve. Wake of thrusting dart, it rises in the air; falling at its nadir, in multi-layered sediment, lurks an unspoken 'No!'.]¹²²

The cry is the extra-linguistic element that the colonial archive cannot subdue, it escapes identification with a subject and leaks across the temporalities of the page, bringing the narrator into communion with her historical forebears:

Ce cri, dans la maison de la clandestinité. [...] Le cri déroula les volutes de refus et parvint jusqu'aux linteaux du plafond. [...] Circulant dans le métro, les jours suivants, je dévisage d'un regard avide les femmes, toutes les femmes. Une curiosité de primitive me dévore: —Pourquoi ne disent-elles pas, pourquoi pas une ne le dira, pourquoi chacune le cache: l'amour, c'est le cri, la douleur qui persiste et qui s'alimente, tandis que s'entrevoit l'horizon de bonheur.

¹²¹ Comparison can be made here between Artaud's use of *cris-souffle* or 'cries-breaths' Deleuze discusses in *The Logic of Sense*.

¹²² Djebar, *L'amour La Fantasia*, p.153 [p.107].

[That cry, in the house of our clandestine existence. [...] that cry unfurled its spiral of refusal and reached up to the timbers of the ceiling. [...] Travelling in the Métro during the next few days, I stare closely at all the women I see around me. I am devoured with curiosity as if I were some primitive creature: 'Why do they not say, why will not one of them say, why does each one hide this fact: love is the cry, the persistent pain which feeds upon itself, while only a glimpse is vouchsafed on the horizon of happiness?]¹²³

The cry is a pass-word similar to those instances of indirect discourse whereby characters become beloved—become transformed by the social character of love, which enacts transformations on bodies. But in this case the cry or scream cannot be re-territorialised, and is in this sense trans-historical, as that which refuses to be individuated by the archive—a process of becoming-woman that dissolves the binary structures of coloniser-colonised, French-Arabic, which might seek to circumscribe it:

Propulsion interminable. S'étirant dans mes membres, se gonflant dans ma poitrine, écorchant mon larynx et emplissant mon palais, un cri enraciné s'exhale dans un silence compact; une poussée anime mes jambes. Tout mon être est habité par ces mots: << Mamma est morte, est morte, est morte! >> ; je porte ma douleur, je la devance même, j'appelle ou je fuis je ne sais, mais je crie et ce cri ne signifie plus rien, sinon l'élan d'un corps de filletes en avant...

[I am driven relentlessly onward. A scream is implanted within me; it shoots through my limbs, swelling in my chest, rasping my larynx, fills my mouth and is exhaled in a dense silence; my legs move automatically. My whole being is inhabited by these words: 'Mamma is dead! Is dead!'; I carry my grief with me, I even run ahead with it, I don't know whether I'm calling out

¹²³ Ibid. p.154 [p.107].

or fleeing, but I'm screaming and this scream no longer means anything except that a child is being driven on and on...]¹²⁴

The silence is *dense*, but not with subjects waiting to be *unveiled*. Subjectivity is already a fold in a veil, is already a threshold or becoming: "*I* is an order-word".¹²⁵ The scream or cry is that aesthetic figure through which the novel draws together the occluded, forgotten, overlooked or forbidden histories of Arabic female experience towards a collective assemblage of enunciation. But the assemblage does not come about *ex nihilo*—out of the void—but is criss-crossed and composed out of a line of flight, an a-signifying rupture, that redistributes the sense attributed to bodies, the capacity to name a people. The novel does not simply (or not only) represent the horrors of colonisation, but extracts from that history a singular line (the scream) which refuses to belong to history. The scream, or cry, emerges in the course of novel's historical narrative as a zone of crisis or non-signifying semiotics that opens up the narrator's own, specific history, to virtual continuum of screaming that precedes and extends beyond her being-in-the-present. Djébar's novel maps the transverse movement of the scream across the colonial archive, as that element which cannot be represented by historicism alone, and therefore allows for a differential future that would not be determined by the horrors of the past.¹²⁶ In that sense Djébar can be said to "write the scream" rather than represent the horror of her subject matter, in the same manner that Deleuze describes Bacon as "paint[ing] the scream" and not the horror in his work.¹²⁷ In the context of *A Thousand Plateaus*, the scream collapses the forms of content and forms of expression which attempt to capture and subdue it (female, Algerian,

¹²⁴ Ibid. p.271-272 [p.193]. In fact, the very idea of postcoloniality as a desire to move beyond the binary structures of coloniser-colonised is the claim made by Lorna Burns in *Contemporary Caribbean Writing and Deleuze*.

¹²⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.93. Original emphasis.

¹²⁶ Lorna Burns makes the case for similar strategies at work of Wilson Harris; where desire functions as a force which scans the past in search of an unactualised virtuality, instead of a determinate structure acting on the present which is unavailable for recollection or reconstitution. See Burns, *Contemporary Caribbean Writing and Deleuze*, pp.79-86.

¹²⁷ "We must consider the special case of the scream. Why does Bacon think of the scream as one of the highest objects of painting? 'Paint the scream' [...] If we scream, it is always as victims of invisible and insensible forces that scramble every spectacle, and that even lie beyond pain and feeling. This is what Bacon means when he says he wanted 'to paint the scream more than the horror'. Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation* trans. Daniel W. Smith, (London: Continuum 2003; Paris: Editions de la Difference 1981), p.60.

Muslim, colonised, post-colonised, cosmopolitan, marginal) so as to place them in continuous variation:

The relation of presupposition between variables of content and expression no longer requires two forms: the placing-in-variation of the variables instead draws the two forms together and effects the conjunction of cutting edges of deterritorialisation on both sides [...] Gestures and things, voices and sounds, are caught up in the same 'opera', swept away by the same shifting effects of stammering, vibrato, tremelo, and overspilling.¹²⁸

Fantasia's contrapuntal structure, its mode of narration as a minor musical composition (a fantasia rather than an opera) relies upon this sporadic breakdown of signification—where the scream or cry allows voices, motifs or refrains to pass between their historical specificity and become part of a collective assemblage of enunciation that cannot be contained by the colonial archive. In short, the novel becomes a war machine by which the victims of colonialism might populate the desert of their non-being. Djébar's writing, her occupation of the French language, allows the silence which precedes and crushes her to become dense with a people yet to come; a virtual but not actual people whose lines and contours the novel scans for traces of in the "future of the archive".

In the following chapter, the sense in which the line of flight functions in the manner of a forced movement will be thought of specifically as a *postcolonial* concept, in turn removing it from the original context in which it was deployed by Deleuze and Guattari. That is to say, the line of flight as an a-signifying movement in between words and things (an incorporeal transformation) will become key to the way I wish to think world literature via Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy—as a geoliterature which engages in *fictioning* the real as well as writing fictions about the real.

¹²⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.121.

3. (Un)becoming Postcolonial

In the years since his death, the reception of Deleuze's oeuvre has congealed into two distinct images of his thought. The first is the anarcho-desiring Spinozist—the rhizomatic schizo-philosopher of pure affirmation – the second is the aristocratic pure metaphysician; austere creator of ontological palaces of thought. Alain Badiou and Antonio Negri are the two figures at the forefront of this struggle-for-Deleuze, with the formative event for both being May 1968 and their specific proximity to Deleuze at the University of Paris VIII. Negri attended Deleuze's seminars and credits him with "[showing] us a full and sunlit horizon of philosophy in Spinoza".¹ Badiou, meanwhile, led brigades of Maoist students in a campaign to disrupt Deleuze's classes.² Any attempt to think through Deleuze's conceptual vocabulary today has to grapple with these two interpretations. But the way I wish to think this conflict follows from Deleuze's own apprenticeship in the philosophy of Henri Bergson. That is, through thinking the task of philosophy according to a problematic conceptual field. The problem in Deleuze's philosophy to which this chapter is addressed is the problem of difference. Thinking difference as a generative force, rather than as hybridity or dialectical negation, will extend my previous analysis of the geoliterature at work in Algerian writing, towards a redefinition of world literature according to the processes of differentiation, forced movements, and escapes marked by the figure of the line of flight. The work of postcolonial theorists such as Simone Bignall and Lorna Burns, working outside of the dominant dialectical tradition in postcolonial studies, will inform this argument. Furthermore, the fiction of Dambudzo Marechera, which appears in the immediate aftermath of Zimbabwe's transition to independence, but whose response to those

¹ Antonio Negri, *The Savage Anomaly: The Power of Spinoza's Metaphysics and Politics*, trans. Michael Hardt, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1999; Milan: Feltrinelli Editore 1981), p.xx.

² "For the Maoist that I was, Deleuze, as the philosophical inspiration for what we called the "anarcho-desirers," was an enemy all the more formidable for being internal to the "movement" and for the fact that his course was one of the focal points of the university. [...] I attacked him with the heavy verbal artillery of the epoch. Once, I even commanded a "brigade" of intervention in his course." Alain Badiou, *Deleuze: The Clamour of Being*, trans. Louise Burchill, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1999; Paris: Hachette Littérature 1997), p.2.

conditions of periphery is aberrant according to the usual conceptual categories of world literary theory, will be instructive.

This problem oscillates in Deleuze's early study of Bergson between two competing concepts of difference ("intensive" and "extensive") which in *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* become indexed to two divergent approaches to thinking both artistic and political creativity. I will diagnose this conceptual problematic as ultimately a postcolonial one – in fact *the* problem which continually undermines the field of postcolonial theory – via an encounter between Deleuze and the Zimbabwean writer Dambudzo Marechera. In doing so I will frame Marechera's praxis within a Bergsonian understanding of intensive difference, which provides us with an alternative way of thinking collective political action against Empire and neo-colonialism outside of the dialectical models offered to us by contemporary versions of world literary theory. Arguing against commentators such as Badiou, Peter Hallward and Gayatri Spivak - for whom Deleuze's philosophy of difference almost entirely neglects real struggles against colonialism - I wish to situate anti-imperial praxis at the centre of interpretations of Deleuze today, to which I point to two studies by Simone Bignall and Lorna Burns as examples.³ Ultimately I am concerned with the *political content* of the early Deleuze in a way which disrupts the popular characterisation of his career being split between the praxis of an "academic" history of philosophy in texts such as *Bergsonism*, and the Guattari-inspired schizo-activism of *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*. I therefore totally reject Slavoj Žižek's recent claim that "not a single one of Deleuze's own texts is in any way directly political".⁴

After describing the main tenets of the anti-affirmational critique of Deleuze, which focus on the question of agency within systems-theoretical ontologies, I will then draw out Deleuze's concept of intensive or virtual difference from his early encounter with the philosophy of Henri Bergson. This will be based

³ See Simone Bignall, *Postcolonial Agency: Critique and Constructivism*, (London: Bloomsbury 2010), Lorna Burns, *Contemporary Caribbean Writing and Deleuze: Literature Between Postcolonialism and Post-Continental Philosophy*, (London: Bloomsbury 2012).

⁴ Slavoj Žižek, *Organs Without Bodies: On Deleuze and Consequences*, (London: Routledge 2004), p.18.

on two texts which bracket a decade in Deleuze's early philosophical development – the essay “Bergson's Conception of Difference” and his full length study *Bergsonism*. A closer look at Deleuze's interpretation of Bergson in these works reveals the specificity of Deleuze's concept of difference in contrast to the dialectical tradition dominant in France during the post-war period. This ‘tradition of negation’ which begins with the reintroduction of Hegel into French philosophy by Alexandre Kojève in the 1930's and informs both Sartre and Jean Hyppolite has to be read into Deleuze's engagement with Bergson. As Simone Bignall has shown, understanding this break with dialectical philosophy is key to addressing the perceived loss of individual agency which some argue afflicts Deleuze's political philosophy.⁵ The Kojève-Sartre tradition, which grounds discussions of agency on lack and negativity, in turn informs those strains of postcolonial theory emanating from Frantz Fanon. On the other hand, reading the Deleuze of *Bergsonism* as a *postcolonial* thinker reveals how Hegelian dialectics struggles to adapt once national movements for decolonisation succeed only partially in achieving autonomy from the global system of capitalist modes of production and accumulation. In light of this apparent impasse, I will read the work of Dambudzo Marechera against the grain of “the postcolonial” defined as a dialectic of negation between centre and periphery, in favour of a *postcolonial Bergsonism* derived jointly from Marechera's writing-machine and Deleuze's affirmative philosophy of difference - which finds passages of escape, lines of flight, out of the doxa of capitalist globalisation. The postcolonial politics of a geoliterature, I argue, cannot be thought simply in the dialectical terms of the periphery ‘writing back’ to the centre, but effects an immanent “becoming with the world” that undoes those geographies of domination themselves.

Here I draw upon a longstanding relationship between postcolonial studies and “World Literature” conceived, not as the literature of globalisation, but as certain kind of writing which originates in anti-colonial struggle and which, in articulating a resistance to the coloniser's world, works to create a better one, and which predates Moretti and Casanova's interventions, and in fact still offers

⁵ See Bignall, *Postcolonial Agency*, pp.30-59.

significant resources for developing an alternative to their systemic arguments when it comes to questions of oppression, domination and literary struggle. In *The Location of Culture* (1994), Homi Bhabha responds to Goethe's speculative remarks on world literature by indexing the very condition of such a literature to "a form of cultural dissensus" where "non-consensual terms of affiliation may be established on the grounds of historical trauma".⁶ In contrast to Goethe's cosmopolitanism, Bhabha argues that it is precisely the ways in which "cultures recognise themselves through their projections of 'otherness'" which offers the possibility that "transnational histories of migrants, the colonised, or political refugees—these border and frontier conditions—may be the terrains of world literature".⁷ Like Moretti and Casanova, the definition of world-literary texts lies here more in a *way* of reading rather than in generic classifications, with an emphasis on the peripheral or frontier condition as the site of creative renewal, but in Bhabha systemicity is only the *effect* rather than the cause of world-literariness—its apparent integration and stability *as world* only ever partial and incomplete because the imbalance of power relations and structural asymmetry between centre and periphery are its very foundations. There lies a parallel here with Deleuze and Guattari's reimagining of the history of capitalism (and thus the history of imperialism) as defined by the dissensual movement of lines of flight rather than a system in equilibrium with itself. Reading postcolonial literature as *world* literature, then, was for Bhabha not the imposition of an allegorical master-code (as in the case of Jameson's remarks on third-world literature) but already a call to question the disciplinary modes of comparativism themselves prior to Moretti's conjectures. Edward Said would recognise the concurrence of these debates when, in 2000, he noted that "there is something basically unworkable or at least drastically changed in the frameworks by which we study literature" which he links to the institutional crisis facing comparative literature departments subject to "the downgrading of the humanities to service functions".⁸ The increasing specialisation of literary disciplinarity in terms of engagements with minority national literatures, Said suggests "has had one

⁶ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, (New York: Routledge 1994), p.17.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Edward Said, "Globalising Literary Study", *PMLA* Vol. 116, No. 1, pp.64-68, p.64.

major casualty, which is the sense of a collective human history as grasped in some of the global patterns of dependence and interdependence sketched by Appadurai, Wallerstein, and, if I may mention my own effort, the last chapter of *Culture and Imperialism*".⁹ Yet despite the acknowledgement of Wallerstein and world-systems analysis, the question of how "can one formulate a theory of connection between part and whole that denies neither the specificity of the individual experience nor the validity of a projected, putative, or imputed whole?" is left open-ended, and marks the essential divide which prevents a more thorough synthesis of world(-systems) literature and postcolonial studies.¹⁰

In what follows I will respond to Said's question, building on Spivak and Cheah's recent attempts to think world literature and postcolonial literature together; as the tension between a spatial and temporal regime of globalisation and the various postcolonial space-times it overrides (and, moreover, how to read in a "planetary" way other than by the imposition of a whole upon the parts?).¹¹ In doing so I will add to the developing overlap between the fields of postcolonial studies and Deleuzian philosophy I've already gestured towards in the thought of Reda Bensmaia, but which also includes the work of postcolonial scholars such as Timothy Bewes, Graham Huggan, Simone Bignall and Lorna Burns.¹² This overlap finds in Deleuze's philosophy an alternative to the dialectical models founded on the opposition between coloniser and colonised, and which was vital to movements for national liberation in Africa and elsewhere, but which finds itself unable to grapple with the complex, intersecting ways in which violence and oppression continue after independence. Timothy Bewes, for example, identifies an event of postcolonial shame in which the ability to write from a postcolonial perspective is

⁹ Ibid. p.68.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Gayatri Spivak, *Death of a Discipline*, (New York: Columbia University Press 2003) p.71. See also Peng Cheah, *What is a World? On Postcolonial Literature as World Literature*, (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press 2016).

¹² Timothy Bewes, *The Event of Postcolonial Shame*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press 2011), Graham Huggan, *Interdisciplinary Measures: Literature and the Future of Postcolonial Studies*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press 2008), Simone Bignall, *Postcolonial Agency: Critique and Constructivism*, (London: Bloomsbury 2010), Lorna Burns, *Contemporary Caribbean Writing and Deleuze: Literature Between Postcolonialism and Post-Continental Philosophy*, (London: Bloomsbury 2012).

already to disassociate oneself from subjection to colonial authority; writing, by its very eloquence, enacts a shameful separation of the one who writes from those on behalf of whom she writes *for*. This might be thought about in terms of Spivak's argument that the subaltern, as the excluded category of subjectivity, cannot itself be represented, but Bewes also links it to Deleuze's remarks on shame in the work of Primo Levi:

Levi forges an equation between the experience of shame and the capacity to write that has become famous in the literature of holocaust survival. 'We, the survivors, are not true witnesses', he writes. 'We are those who by their prevarications or good luck did not touch bottom' [...] Levi's shame is the shame of being able to speak, of having the tools to bear witness and, *by that same fact*, nothing to bear witness to.¹³

The equating of this thought to the postcolonial situation is not incidental, not least because concentration camps were an invention of the British empire to begin with, but also because it speaks to the fundamental problem of subjection to which postcolonial literatures respond: by what mechanism does resistance, in bearing witness to atrocity, speak? If resistance lies in the non-being of the subaltern, then by the same token their speaking *as* subaltern transforms them into being(s) and thus *not* subaltern. The importance of Deleuze's philosophy for postcolonial studies, therefore, lies in articulating a philosophy of creation which does not depend on the unveiling of non-being by being. That is, in contrast to the dialectic by which being is transformed by what it is not, its opposite or non-being, Deleuze's philosophy of becoming offers an account of subjectivity that escapes the dilemma of rightful speech by disarticulating subjectivity from the subject or person, and instead gives agency to a range of pre-individual or impersonal affects which might escape the demand to speak on behalf of oneself. This is the argument put forth by Simone Bignall, that:

¹³ Bewes, *The Event of Postcolonial Shame*, p.56. Original emphasis.

Deleuze employs a wholly positive conceptualisation of ontological becoming, grounded in the concept of positive desiring-production and resulting in an alternative view of the self and a non-dialectical view of history [...] I will argue that this alternative view of ontological desire, becoming and selfhood also corresponds to a different conceptualisation of affirmative action, and in turn, to alternative theories about historical processes of social change [...] social forms emerge and transform as an effect of the shifting relations of power into which bodies enter. Social agency involves an effort to understand and organise one's relations, in ways that cause the actualisation of preferred forms of collective society, such as those that might be described as postcolonial.¹⁴

Deleuze's ontology of creative actualisation of the virtual shifts the ground of subjective agency away from the subject in which that agency is embodied, and towards a nebulous understanding of the ways in which power, resistance and affirmative action circulate between bodies. In responding to Bignall's alignment of Deleuze's non-dialectical account of becoming and history with a specifically postcolonial theory of subjective action, I wish to argue for the centrality of these debates to theories of world literature in which literary acts of resistance are under theorised at least in world-systems terminology, let alone literary acts of resistance that are not conceptualised via the dialectical relationship between centre and periphery (in which the *being* of the centre is progressively unveiled by the incorporation of what was not previously thought of as literature in cultures of the periphery and semi-periphery). That is to say, I wish to argue for a non-dialectical theory of world literature founded on Bignall's Deleuzian account of postcolonial agency.

The rejoinder to this argument would surely be that Deleuze's philosophy of becoming in which categories of identity, subjectivity and being are displaced in favour of a much more nebulous, dispersed and complex account of social organisation *precludes* the very possibility for resistance from the outset. Privileging the pre- or impersonal over and above the individual or subjective, one could say

¹⁴ Simone Bignall, *Postcolonial Agency*, pp.9-10.

Deleuze's philosophy lacks any solid ground from which a theory of social action might be made: where does agency come from if not the antagonism between relations of power and those subject to them, and who in being subject to them, are uniquely able to express such antagonism? This is the longstanding critique of Deleuze's philosophy made by Peter Hallward in his two works *Absolutely Postcolonial: Writing Between the Singular and Specific* (2001) and *Deleuze: Out of This World* (2006).¹⁵ Hallward's argument depends upon the claim that, dispensing with dialectical theories of antagonism, Deleuze's philosophy lacks any concept of relation *as such*—because his conceptual vocabulary acquiesces to a purely singular theory of relationality which excludes specific, defined or localised relations themselves:

Deleuze's project begins with a critique of merely 'specific difference' (Aristotle, Hegel), so as to clear a space in which to think singular or Creative 'difference of difference as immediate element', in which it is possible to recognise that 'every creation is singular'. In Deleuze's somewhat idiosyncratic terminology, what is given is relational difference and identity, the 'shackles of mediation', subjective interiority, equivocity, signification, desire-as-lack, transcendence, Oedipus, the 'long error' of representation, etc. What is real, by contrast, is a vitalist, self-differing force of Creativity in its purest form—an absolute intensity or virtuality in constant metamorphosis, a desire that is creative of its object, a perception that gives rise to what it perceives.¹⁶

What is singular, in Hallward's reading of Deleuze, is that which creates its own conditions of existence: life, the virtual, or desiring-production, which is itself indifferent to each *specific* case of difference (the difference between thing x and thing y). To the extent that relations between individual instances of difference occur in Deleuze's work, "the only significant 'relationship' between individuals must be measured in terms of the virtual which underlies them—a relation of

¹⁵ Peter Hallward, *Absolutely Postcolonial: Writing Between the Singular and Specific*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press 2001), *Deleuze: Out of This World*, (London: Verso 2006).

¹⁶ Hallward, *Absolutely Postcolonial*, p.12

purely quantitative difference along a single scale of proximity to the full Creative potential of intensity or Life".¹⁷ When it comes to literature, Hallward posits that those postcolonial texts closest to Deleuze's philosophy of creation (such as Edouard Glissant) maintain a *singular* perception of difference at the cost of sacrificing any *specific* relation between the different. In creating the conditions of its own existence, singular writing is theoretically universal, but not subject to the law of dialectical antagonism over which it has no agency. Yet freed from the shackles of mediation and dialectical antagonism between coloniser and colonised, postcolonial singularity abandons the possibility of a situated, specific relation to other postcolonial literatures and struggles as well.¹⁸

Hallward's ontological arguments I understand to be in the same vein as those by Badiou and Spivak when it comes to Deleuze (which I will discuss further), but they also serve as the baseline by which a Deleuzian reading of postcolonial literature *as* world literature must be staged. Bignall's study, as I have already discussed, is one response to Hallward which develops a fully Deleuzian theory of historical change based on actualisation of the virtual, and which makes the case for a specific and situated postcolonial politics on those terms. The other recent work which seems to me to offer the potential for a suturing of the fields of postcolonial and World Literature along Deleuzian lines is Lorna Burns' *Contemporary Caribbean Writing and Deleuze: Literature Between Postcolonialism and Post-Continental Philosophy* (2012). Here she rejects Hallward's reading of Deleuze's ontology as privileging the virtual over the actual (a configuration which leads away from specific situations of oppression and domination and *out of this world*) on the grounds that:

Hallward bases his reading on a skewed understanding of the Deleuzian concepts of singularity and the virtual. [...] As Deleuze contends in *Difference and Repetition* (1968), there are two sides to the single, immanent reality

¹⁷ Ibid. p.13.

¹⁸ In the work which acts very much as a companion to *Absolutely Postcolonial*, Hallward extends this argument to a rejection of Deleuzian politics in total; on the grounds that it excludes the possibility of meaningful action by individuals in solidarity with one another. See *Deleuze: Out of This World*.

that underpins his thinking and these are termed the actual and the virtual. Yet, while these two sides are distinct and irreducible, the virtual can become actualised while the actual may return to the virtual (counter-actualisation). In this [...] Deleuze adopts Spinoza's dual sense of actual created world and virtual creative force as the two 'unequal odd halves' of reality.¹⁹

Burns indexes Hallward's critique of Deleuze to Hegel's rejection of Spinoza's notion of immanent substance, to which Hallward's text can be read as contemporary elaboration in the field of postcolonial studies. In turning the actual-virtual relation into a dualism in which the latter is the privileged term, Hallward not only misunderstands Deleuze's philosophy of immanence, but actively ignores the role of counter-actualisation in the production of the new—outside and beyond that of the dialectical negation of being by non-being. In this respect Burns' work is fundamental to my own study in asking:

how can we conceive of an immanent production of difference that involves in the first instance no other or limitation? For Deleuze, to polarise postcoloniality and colonialism is to reduce not define the contours of their difference. Rather than limiting itself to, or being trapped by [...] the established terms of colonialism, the difference of postcolonialism is not defined by opposition (and indeed this is Hallward's claim albeit one he critiques).²⁰

As Burns recognises, Deleuze's philosophy of immanence, which works according to processes of actualisation of the virtual and counter-actualisation that are themselves never resolved in a moment of synthesis or overcoming, "is of great significance to postcolonial writers seeking a model of difference which that both preserves specific and individual differences, and provides an alternative to the dialectical opposition which serves to underpin imperialist discourse".²¹

¹⁹ Lorna Burns, *Contemporary Caribbean Writing and Deleuze*, p.13.

²⁰ Ibid. p.19.

²¹ Ibid. p.20.

Burns' focus on contemporary writing from the Caribbean as the prime example of a postcolonial literature which becomes *with* the world according to immanent categories of differences and relationality outside of dialectical models, is one I want to extend and translate to African literature in the form of Dambudzo Marechera. Both her and Bignall's theorising of postcoloniality along Deleuzian lines will be indispensable to my own arguments regarding the relationship between postcolonial studies and world-literary theory, conceived as a becoming in which the capitalist world-system of literary production is subject to its own immanent processes of deterritorialisation and counter-actualisation along lines of flight that undermine the structural categories of core, periphery and semi-periphery themselves.

3.1. The problem of difference: Maoists vs potatoes

Alain Badiou's notorious review of Deleuze and Guattari's *Rhizome* is characteristically remorseless in its dissection of the ontological arguments of *A Thousand Plateaus*. This short essay is crucial for the ways in which it encapsulates the arguments contained in Badiou's later treatment of Deleuze and for its laying the entire failure of the revolt of May 68 at the door of Deleuze and Guattari. This failure, according to Badiou, was a result of "a kind of horizontal storm, or a cumulative dispersion, in which on top of everything the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia could vindicate the role of tactical vanguard."²² This betrayal of May 1968 occurs via their renunciation, in Badiou's view, of the real meaning of the Marxist dialectic:

Only a moron can confuse the Marxist dialectical principle 'one divides into two' with the genealogy for family trees concealed in 'one becomes two'.
For what the dialectic says is the exact opposite of the 'strong principal

²² Alain Badiou, "The Fascism of the Potato", in *The Adventure of French Philosophy*, ed. and trans. Bruno Bosteels (London: Verso 2012), p.192. Originally published under the pseudonym George Peyrol, in *La Situation Actuelle sur le Front de la Philosophie*, (Paris: François Maspero 1977), pp.42-52.

unity' imputed to it; it is *the divided essence of the movement as One* [...]

The One has no existence as entity, there is unity only from movement, all is process.²³

In making this argument, however, Badiou reduces the ontological force of Deleuze/Deleuze-Guattari's non-dialectical philosophy to a dualism (the one vs the multiple) which is itself a phantasm of the dialectical antagonism. What's missing here is the qualitative difference between the non-identitarian politics of Marxist dialectics and the non-identitarian politics of Deleuzian multiplicities. That is to say, both are philosophies of process, of relation, rather than essence.²⁴ Rather than a dualism between points, Deleuze and Deleuze-Guattari's ontology is in fact directed towards the same "labour of division"²⁵ – the differential relation which endlessly defers Being in favour of becoming – but which *thinks* that difference in a qualitatively different way I locate in the concept of the line of flight. Otherwise one becomes stuck in a numerical regression which, as Badiou correctly observes: "loses the thread of the unity of opposites and sees salvation in the redoubling of the One, which flips into its opposite, for in the dialectic two times One does not equal Two but once again One".²⁶ The problem which Deleuze's philosophy seeks to address is to think "being [...] in becoming" or difference-in-kind as positive, outside of any dialectical negation and always "in flight" or "on the line".²⁷ Consequently, Badiou's attack on the rhizome (if only at this stage) can be said to miscarry in two ways: Firstly, failure to think difference positively (as difference-in-itself) and, secondly, failure to think agency or creation beyond negation ("Whoever renounces antagonism [...] has the need sooner or later to kneel down, under the cover of the

²³ Ibid. p.194. Original emphasis.

²⁴ Hence, in *Difference and Repetition*: "The extreme is not the identity of opposites, but rather the univocity of the different [...] eternal return employs negation like a *nachfolge* [i.e. successor/imitator] and invents a new formula for the negation of the negation: everything which can be denied is and must be denied". Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton, (London: Continuum 2004; Paris: Presses Universitaires de France 1967), p.66.

²⁵ Badiou, "The Fascism of the Potato", p.195.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

cult of the self, before the real political powers, before the separate unity of the state").²⁸

That these failures operate at the highest level of abstraction and in the pressing moment of leftist strategy (how do you transform the general strike of May 68 into a permanent revolution?) simultaneously is crucial: they will serve as the two ways in which we can systematically uncover the immediate political ramifications to Deleuze's earliest formulation of his concept of difference. A continuity should be drawn between the pre-Guattari, so-called "philosophical Deleuze", and the post-68 "political Deleuze", which renders the Bergsonian problem of difference similar in kind to the strategic problems faced by postcolonial and anti-colonial movements in the latter half of the twentieth century. Marechera's work is emblematic of this bind as it emerges at the point at which Zimbabwe achieves independence from colonial British rule and consequently is caught in an institutional struggle between competing definitions of Zimbabwean literature or African Literature - both of which struggle to avoid merely repeating at the periphery the canonical structures of national literatures which over-determine the imperialist centre. My contention is that Deleuze's search for a philosophy of difference that cannot be reduced to identity or totality finds its immediate political corollary in the choices faced by anticolonial struggles following independence.

Elizabeth Grosz describes this Bergsonian politics of difference as a force of *unbecoming* as much as a becoming or becoming-other; a differential movement that isn't contained by a conceptual unity or totalising perspective that would cancel it out or land it in some post-differential world (such as a future utopia or perfect world) but always an *aberrant* movement or line of flight. In this she links together Deleuze's Bergsonism with a critical politics of unbecoming against those who argue Deleuze's philosophy of difference knows only the affirmation of differences-in-the-world or what merely appears as different, without concern for how those differences might themselves be turned against themselves through the power of unbecoming. Bergsonian duration, rendered by Deleuze as a philosophy

²⁸ Ibid. p.201.

and a politics of intensive difference or difference-in-itself, is therefore also a *critical* philosophy but without the structural role previously held by negation or dialectics that would guide that critical force towards some ultimate end. The importance of thinking the power of unbecoming without dialectical negation is obvious for those struggles (such as feminism) that have historically found themselves ostracised by the way negation has been thought *only* as the negation of class antagonism within, for example, Marxism:

Difference is not the union of the two sexes, the overcoming of racial and other differences through the creation or production of a universal term by which they can be equalised or neutralised, but the generation of ever-more variation or differentiation. Difference generates further difference because difference inheres the force of duration (becoming/unbecoming) in all things, in all acts of differentiation and in all things and terms thus differentiated.²⁹

The Bergsonism I will uncover in Deleuze's early writings is not opposed to his later, so-called political works, but is on the contrary their fulfilment in a philosophy of difference without a grounding concept of unity or identity such as race, nation, class or gender to which something differs. The real for Deleuze does not need to be negated in order to be thought (where stripping away layers of cultural, sexual or racial difference will reveal some prior common existence). Instead it is the self-negating movement of becoming which is at the same time an *unbecoming* that philosophy must "think", and political movements must become worthy of.³⁰ This is the critical force of Deleuze's Bergsonism, his postcolonial Bergsonism, and the power which animates Marechera's passion for the real in his writings-flights-becomings. As Grosz argues, following Deleuze, a passion for the real in science, philosophy or art always takes the form of a delirium or escape in the first instance, if it is to succeed in its critical task of unbecoming:

²⁹ Elizabeth Grosz, 'Bergson, Deleuze and the Becoming of Unbecoming', *Parallax* 11:2 (2005), 4-13 (p.7).

³⁰ To paraphrase Deleuze: we must "become worthy of what happens to us". See Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester and Charles Stivale, (London: Continuum 2004; Paris: Les Editions de Minuit 1969), pp.170-171.

Deleuze seeks an understanding of the real that is based on two principles: the real is positive, full, has no lack or negation, except through its own positive capacity for self enfolding; and the real is dynamic, open-ended, ever-changing, giving the impression of stasis and fixity only through the artificial isolation of systems, entities or states. His abiding concern remains with the real, with defining and refining being or reality so that its difference from itself, its fundamental structure of becoming or self-divergence – which may also be understood as an unbecoming – is impossible to ignore. A real that lacks nothing, that is fully positive, that functions as a whole; and a real that changes, that generates the new, that continues becoming, even as it un-becomes earlier becomings. In short, Deleuze seeks a real that is intimately linked to the dynamism of temporality itself.³¹

Thinking the dynamism of temporality itself is where Deleuze's Bergsonism will take him in *Difference and Repetition*, and which I will utilise as a means to think the becoming of world literature outside of the historicist paradigms of nationalism and globalism respectively in my next chapter. But this dynamism, or the radical openness of the future understood as force which cuts through the line of time, first needs to be understood in the context of Deleuze's Bergsonian philosophy of difference, which I argue is always and already a postcolonial political philosophy of unbecoming.

In *Bergsonism* Deleuze lists the roles or functions through which two competing aspects of difference can be philosophically understood:

One is represented by space [...] it is a multiplicity of exteriority, of simultaneity, of juxtaposition, of order, of quantitative differentiation, of *difference in degree*; it is a numerical multiplicity, *discontinuous and actual*. The other type of multiplicity appears in pure duration: it is an internal multiplicity of succession, of fusion, of organization, of heterogeneity, of

³¹ Grosz, p.12.

qualitative discrimination, or of *difference in kind*; it is a *virtual and continuous* multiplicity that cannot be reduced to numbers.³²

Both of these variations on difference operate on the real but without there being a contradiction that would transform them into a unity of opposites. The former is a function of the actual, of how difference is spatialised as the diversity of given things or states of affairs. The latter refers to difference as pure relation – as virtual process of self-differentiation to which objects, persons, states-of-affairs are the resultant actualisation in space. Hence internal or virtual difference is a theory of ontological genesis according to which matter differs from itself, first, before it differs from other kinds of materials. Things or states of affairs are already composites of a self-differing process of actualisation: they are a multiplicity.

Deleuze draws this argument from Bergson's *Time and Free Will* where Bergson's description of "two kinds of multiplicity, two possible senses of the word "distinguish", two conceptions, the one qualitative and the quantitative, of the difference between *same* and *other*" closely mirrors the language of contemporary systems-theory in its understanding of intensive and extensive space.³³ The former refers to spaces defined only in terms of intensive continua of differences (such as a weather-system) wherein the composition of the space changes qualitatively according to singular points (of heat, pressure) rather than quantitatively in terms of external limits or boundaries:

When we explicitly count units by stringing them along a spatial line, is it not the case that, alongside this addition of identical terms standing out from a homogenous background, an organisation of these units is going on in the depths of the soul, a wholly dynamic process, not unlike the purely qualitative way in which an anvil, if it could feel, would realise a series of blows from a hammer?³⁴

³² Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, (New York: Zone Books 1988; Paris: Presse Universitaire de France 1966), p.38. Original emphasis.

³³ Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay On The Immediate Data Of Consciousness*, trans. F.L. Pogson, (Montana: Kessinger Publishing 2000 [1889]) p.121.

³⁴ Ibid. p.123.

Intensive spaces become along *affectual* lines – where quantitative changes in one aspect of the system alter the composition of the whole. Extensive spaces, on the contrary, are defined by external limits, boundaries or frontiers whose shifting patterns have no effect on the elements they contain. Whereas in the second example, of extensive difference, it is a question of *occupying* space, for intensive multiplicities it is a question of becoming *with* the space. Thinking in terms of intensive difference is to think *with* the non-human and affectual zones that compose the world. In their relation to geography, we can map Bergson's intensive and extensive multiplicities on to the difference between major and minor philosophy in *A Thousand Plateaus*. But crucial to the way in which Deleuze (with Guattari) reads this passage is via the concept of the state – such that the interpretation of extensive spatiality becomes indexed to state-space. This is why Bergson's conception of multiplicity becomes *the* primary way of thinking spatial politics against the state in the later works:

Unity always operates in an empty dimension supplementary to that of the system considered (overcoding). The point is that a rhizome or multiplicity never allows itself to be overcoded, never has available a supplementary dimension over and above its number of lines, that is, over and above the multiplicity of numbers attached to those lines.³⁵

Hence, intensive multiplicities – minor assemblages and non-metric zones—become dominated by state-space just as “geometry lies at the crossroads of a physics problem and an affair of the state”.³⁶ Becoming minor, or the intensive morphogenesis of a previously striated physical system, is not a question of occupying space delimited by boundaries, but transforming qualitatively the limits of the space alongside the elements it supposedly contains – a territorialisation. Hence, for Deleuze and Guattari, nomads are not to be identified by their way of traversing space (in fact travel is to be abhorred) but rather for their ability to move

³⁵ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, (London: Continuum 2004; Paris: Les Editions Des Minuit 1980), p.9.

³⁶ Ibid. p.539

at infinite speed within an intensive geometry of lines, vectors of escape, rather than points.³⁷

Moreover, the principle of overcoding—whereby intensive zones are translated and striated into the Euclidian geometry occupied by a subject—has nothing to do with an opposition or binary that would govern and determine this transformation: one is not negated by the other. Rather, discrete or Euclidian spaces are at the same time intensive and continuous – organised by singular points or attractors of affective intensity.

Bergson's reading of early theorists of multiplicity such as Reimann leads Deleuze to locate in him a philosophy of difference which both encompasses and surpasses the dialectical tradition whose reality was based on Euclidean geometry and Cartesian physics: "It was a decisive event when the mathematician Riemann uprooted the multiple from its predicate state and made it a noun, 'multiplicity'. It marked the end of dialectics and the beginning of a typology and topology of multiplicities."³⁸

The capacity for the self-organisation of physical systems takes place according to the shifting dynamics of intensive zones or attractors which regulate behaviour in a state of equilibrium. But in a state of far-from-equilibrium conditions, chemical, biological or linguistic systems are subject to a "high coefficient of deterritorialisation" in which intensive reductions and transversal communication between terms reach a critical mass.³⁹ This is the case with Bergson's concept of "creative evolution" as non-determinate bio-environmental morphogenesis or what Deleuze and Guattari call the rhizome.⁴⁰ As the non-dialectical becoming of multiplicities, the rhizome "in effect [...] constitutes the surplus value of evolution, always coming into being without origin, and only conceivable when evolution is understood as functioning transversally, that is, as

³⁷ "The nomad is on the contrary he who who does not move" *ibid.* p.420.

³⁸ *Ibid.* p.532-533

³⁹ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polen, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1986; Paris: Les Editions de Minuit 1975), p.16.

⁴⁰ Henri Bergson, "Creative Evolution", in *Bergson: Key Writings*, trans. and ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson and John Mularkey, (London: Bloomsbury 2002 [1907]), pp.207-248.

cutting across distinct lineages.”⁴¹ These “far-from-equilibrium conditions” (a phrase Deleuze and Guattari borrow from physical systems theory in chemistry) are the means by which structures open themselves to dynamic variation *without the need for dialectical negation or contradiction*, and in which a minor literature decomposes language’s communicational-representational function into a flow of pure affect.⁴² In minor literature, signifying structures which regulate the relation between the sign and the referent (the thing-meant) give way to an intensive reduction – sound is detached from sense, metaphor becomes metamorphosis.

Ilya Prigogine and Isabelle Stengers have described how the observation of certain solutions at far-from equilibrium conditions led to the eventual discovery of chemical clocks:

Suppose we have two kinds of molecules, "red" and "blue." Because of the chaotic motion of the molecules, we would expect that at a given moment we would have more red molecules, say, in the left part of a vessel. Then a bit later more blue molecules would appear, and so on. The vessel would appear to us as "violet," with occasional irregular flashes of red or blue. However, this is not what happens with a chemical clock; here the system is all blue, then it abruptly changes its colour to red, then again to blue. Because all these changes occur at regular time intervals, we have a coherent process.⁴³

Systems theory would regard this solution as both open and dynamic (rather than closed and stable). That is, an organisation of forces in the environment produces the conditions under which a system moves from a state of relative entropy into a state of predictable but dynamic oscillation. This phenomenon has subsequently been observed across multiple physical systems, where the material elements of a

⁴¹ Keith Ansell-Pearson, *Germinal Life*, (London: Routledge 2012), p.157.

⁴² Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane, (London: Continuum 2004; Paris: Les Éditions De Minuit 1972), p.165. The comparison between literature and science is not incidental - Deleuze himself finds in Proust his favourite definition of the Bergsonian virtual: “real without being actual, ideal without being abstract”, Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, p.97. The first version of *Proust and Signs* appears two years prior to *Bergsonism*.

⁴³ Ilya Prigogine and Isabelle Stengers, *Order Out of Chaos: Man’s New Dialogue with Nature*, (London: Flamingo 1993), p.147-148.

system are prompted by far-from equilibrium conditions to enter into self-organising relations of oscillation. This in spite of the material elements in a system being radically different. As Manuel DeLanda describes:

At the onset of a process of self-organization (when a chemical clock begins to assemble, for example), the mechanisms involved become extremely sensitive to minor fluctuations in the environment. A small change in external conditions, one that in thermodynamic equilibrium would have had negligible consequences - caused perhaps by a relatively weak gravitational or magnetic field - is amplified and directs the kind of chemical clock that is assembled (the period of its oscillations, for example), thereby "naturally selecting" one self-assembly pattern over another.⁴⁴

In far-from-equilibrium conditions, according to Prigogine, matter is capable of "perceiving" extremely minor changes in its environment. Rather than the positive elements of any given system being of concern, in an open-dynamic system the relations between positive elements are primary, being the abstract power determining the response of a material systems to a critical imbalance of forces in the environment. Deleuze and Guattari term this abstract potential for spontaneous self-organisation the "machinic phylum" – a potential for different material systems to enter into machinic relations with one another but where the specific elements in question are irrelevant.⁴⁵ The machinic phylum is the reservoir of abstract solutions (which Bergson terms the virtual) corresponding to problematic relations of force which different flows of matter and energy actualise in various ways. The peripheries of any physical system are the zones where the potential for radical transformation is most potent. But these peripheries are not *necessarily* geographical so much as ontological. This is evident in the number of formally peripheral cities (in respect to capital accumulation) in the world which now contain both first and third world zones of production, circulation and accumulation *in the same physical space*. If "World Literature" is the aesthetic-

⁴⁴ Manuel DeLanda, "Inorganic Life", in *Zone 6: Incorporations*, ed. Jonathan Crary and Sanford Kwinter, (Cambridge: Mass: MIT Press 1991), p.131.

⁴⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.448

semiotic system analogous to the combined and uneven development of capitalist globalisation, then postcolonial writers occupy a unique position at the point where the spatial categories (centre/periphery) which maintain the homeostatic organisation of this system are vulnerable to radical reterritorialisation. This is not a case of writing back to the centre in order to oppose and negate it, but writing in such a way that the moment of re-stratification on an identity (whether that be a peripheral identity – the subject who recognises themselves as other) can be endlessly deferred and put into continuous variation as an intensive reduction. Where theories of World Literature have so far encountered the philosophy of Deleuze, the key differences between intensive and extensive spaces have been blurred – hence Casanova’s conflation of Deleuze-Guattari’s concept of minor literature with the “literary texts [of] small countries” in such a way that ignores Deleuze’s anti-dialectical critique of spatial categories as precisely that logic belonging to the state.⁴⁶

Deleuze’s quarrel with Hegelian dialectics (and consequently that mode of dialectics inherited by postcolonial studies) centres on the immanence of intensive differential processes within actual, extensive reality. When this relationship is thought as two separate orders of reality – as a dualism between virtual and actual - virtual difference is folded back into a theory of the One or the “Univocity of Being” according to Badiou.⁴⁷ In the manner of Hallward, this reads Deleuze’s concept of the virtual as a quasi-spiritualist philosophy, contrary to its rigourously materialist foundations. Consequentially the way material processes and historical movements are transformed by political action are devalued because they are secondary to the virtual or cosmic order of difference-in-itself which is always happening elsewhere. The political objection to Bergsonian ontology is summarised by Hallward in his full length study of Deleuze which followed *Absolutely Postcolonial*:

⁴⁶ Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, trans. M.B. DeBevoise (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press 2004; Paris: Éditions de Seuil 1999), p.201.

⁴⁷ Badiou, *Deleuze*, p.24.

Deleuze writes a philosophy of (virtual) difference without (actual) others. He intuits a purely internal or self-differing difference, a difference that excludes any constitutive mediation between the differed. Such a philosophy precludes a distinctively relational conception of politics as a matter of course.⁴⁸

The apparent duality of virtual and actual, containing Deleuze's initial distinction between positive (Bergsonian) difference and negative (dialectical) difference, leads to a situation in which it appears as if "the political" is at the same time projected onto a universal or cosmic plane of differentiating chaos and made entirely irrelevant to those colonised or subaltern communities for whom the actual state of things is wretched (they are the *wretched of the Earth*). In Hallward's reading of Deleuze's other worldly politics the ability of actual beings to transform the conditions of their existence is nullified. He is led to confirm Badiou's original characterisation of Deleuze/Deleuze-Guattari's commitment to affirmation being aligned with the utmost conservatism: "In places like Palestine, Haiti, Iraq, the agents of imperialism have more to learn from Deleuzian rhizomatics than do their opponents".⁴⁹

Were it the case that virtual self-differentiation nullified the ontological power of the actual to transform itself, this conclusion would be inevitable. However, the virtual and actual, positive and negative difference, are never conceived by Deleuze as a dualism or as an opposition through which one negates the other. Rather, as Lorna Burns has argued effectively, the virtual subsists or endures in its spatial and temporal actualisation, acting as a reservoir of potentiality in the manner of Bergson's concept of memory:

Since each actualisation of the virtual designates the emergence of the new, both *élan vital* and different/ciation describe the creative evolution of the immanent totality: 'evolution takes place from the virtual to actuals. Evolution is actualisation, actualisation is creation'. However, more than this, for Deleuze,

⁴⁸ Peter Hallward, *Out of This World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation*, (London: Verso 2006), p.162.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

Bergson's sense of the virtual as 'gigantic memory' ensures that this creative process is also a temporal evolution. The past for both Deleuze and Bergson is a virtual field available for differentiation within the present as recollection.⁵⁰

An account of Deleuze's positive conception of difference needs to recover his thought for indigenous and anti-colonial struggles today, but in a way which still affirms the immanence of the virtual to material reality. The radical indeterminacy of the virtual is politically troubling (because it commits itself to the importance of chance and spontaneity within organised anti-colonial struggle) but also avoids those struggles falling into an antagonism that reduces the possibilities of becoming-other – as the desire *not* to be an "African writer" as much as the desire not to be a "European" or "Caribbean" writer. This is the commitment to intensive difference, to becoming-imperceptible to the World-Literary system I will identify in the work of Dambudzo Marechera (although his texts are by no means the only possible example) and whose theoretical elaboration Simone Bignall gives shape to in her critique and reconstruction of postcolonial studies along Deleuzian lines. At the same time I will use the encounter between Deleuze and Marechera as justification for reading Deleuze's texts on Bergson under a postcolonial lens. This analysis will depend, however, on *why* Deleuze's critique of negation speaks to the impasse suffered by postcolonial studies when it accepts the terms of dialectical negation. This impasse, I argue, is already implicit in Fanon's late-period anxiety over the extent to which the failures of African national liberation struggles towards the end of the 1960's have their roots in the French dialectical tradition of Kojève and Sartre he himself helped to weaponise against imperialism. There exists in the Fanon of *The Wretched of the Earth* a hitherto undervalued anticipation of Deleuze's non-dialectical philosophy which is *at the same time* a critique of the nation-state as the proper form of postcolonial consciousness.

⁵⁰ Burns, *Contemporary Caribbean Writing and Deleuze*, p.81.

3.2. The problem of agency: multiplicities against the dialectic

In 1944, while still at high school, Deleuze was present at several gatherings in Paris which included amongst others Alexandre Kojève, Jean Hyppolite and Jean Paul Sartre.⁵¹ These figures constitute the axis through which the reception and appreciation of Hegel's philosophy becomes a key subject of post-war French philosophy. Kojève's reading of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* rests on a theory of praxis in which the agency of social transformation is conceived in terms of critical negativity. This in turn informs via Sartre and subsequently Frantz Fanon much of the postcolonial theory in the twentieth century I wish to distance from Deleuze's thought – notably that of Gayatri Spivak and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o—which grounds its approach on the negation of being by difference. Crucially for Kojève, negation never reaches a moment of final unity or cancellation of difference as the subject's coming to self-consciousness as it does in Hegel, but instead is the driving force behind the subject's recognition of her own desire as an ontological void:

Desire is directed not toward a given being but toward a nonbeing [...] to desire nonbeing is to liberate oneself from being, to realise one's autonomy, one's freedom. To be anthropogenetic, then, desire must be directed toward a nonbeing – that is, toward another desire, another greedy emptiness, another *I*. For desire is absence of being (to be hungry is to be deprived of food); it is a nothingness that *nihilates* in being, and not a being that *is*.⁵²

For Kojève, ontological void, lack and negativity are the conditions of human agency as such:

The man who desires a thing humanly acts not so much to possess a thing as to make another recognise his right [...] to that thing, to make another

⁵¹ François Dosse, *Deleuze and Guattari: Intersecting Lives*, trans. Deborah Glassman, (New York: Columbia University Press 2010; Paris: Éditions La Découverte 2007), p.92.

⁵² Alexandre Kojève, "Desire and Work in the Master and Slave", trans. James H. Nicholas Jr., in *Hegel's Dialectic of Desire and Recognition: Texts and Commentary* ed. John O'Neill, (Albany: State University of New York Press 1996; Paris: Éditions Gallimard 1947), p.50. Original emphasis.

recognise him as the owner of that thing. [...] it is only desire of such a recognition (*Annerkennung*), it is only action that flows from, such a desire, that creates, realises, and reveals a human, nonbiological [...] one can already foresee, or understand ('deduce') what human existence will be.⁵³

In human beings desire-as-negativity is raised to the absolute; as the operator of differentiation which, in the first instance, is the differentiation between purely biological (i.e non-reflexive) negativity and human (self-reflexive) negativity. Hunger in humans is raised to the level of concepts: as the "idea" of hunger. But this primary negation is first and foremost an attribute of the actual qua the real: material history happens through the negation of that which exists. Agency is devalued as a movement which can only realise the *possible* forms of action constrained within the inevitable poverty of existence in itself – as ontological lack. This implies that reason as a property of humanity comes hand in hand with negation – one of Fanon's eventual anxieties over Negritude as an aesthetics of unreason which only reaffirms in dialectical opposition the dominance of European rationality. Non-being is the condition upon which forms of all possible forms of agency can take place.

From this follows Sartre's emphasis, in a direct repetition of Kojève, on scarcity as a material fact of existence in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*: "Scarcity is a fundamental determination of man [...] Indeed, it is because of this fundamental scarcity that certain relations of production have arisen, defined on the basis of a mode of production, which institutionally exclude certain social groups from full consumption, reserving it for other groups, insufficient in number to consume everything"⁵⁴. Difference is thus the result of a primary negation or void (nonbeing) which is the genesis of action. But the theory of praxis Sartre describes here is one which, conversely, folds human agency back into its biological determination by scarcity. In contrast to Hallward's argument regarding Deleuze's commitment to human emancipation, what we find in the dialectical tradition

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason Vol.1*, trans. Alan Sheridan-Smith, (London: Verso 1976; Paris: Editions Gallimard 1960), p.138-9.

inherited by Deleuze is a theory of praxis which brings ever diminishing returns: “It goes without saying that scarcity [...] can be the occasion for the formation of new groups whose project is to combat it. Man, in fact, produces his life in the midst of other men who are also producing theirs, or at least causing others to produce it; he produces his life in the social field of scarcity.”⁵⁵ Lack is the ontological field (givenness) which praxis is endlessly compelled to try and negate, but which the labour of political organisation, class solidarity and revolutionary action can never overcome in and of itself: “given a social field which is defined by scarcity, that is, given the historical human field, labour for man has to be defined as *praxis* aimed at satisfying need *in the context of scarcity* by a particular negation of it.”⁵⁶

Struggles against colonial domination are therefore reduced to a relationship between the actual and the merely possible, given the *a priori* field of scarcity which serves as the determining ground for the emergent structural relationships between forms. This is key to understanding the poverty Marechera identifies in the intellectual and political climate of post-independence Zimbabwe – which appears to screen out potentials for communities outside the state-form.

Spontaneity and chance encounters are excluded as effective tools for political emancipation in Sartre’s political philosophy. As one commenter describes: “By restricting group identification to a purely reactive status [...] Sartre omits both those concepts (such as love, friendship, kinship) through which we can reach an organicity of communal relations as well as vital, enriching experiences of inter-subjectivity that arise from spontaneous gatherings”⁵⁷. Deleuze and Guattari’s political philosophy can be seen as an attempt to incorporate such notions of spontaneous gatherings within an organisational strategy that can endure without cancelling such encounters out.⁵⁸

This is consequently where Deleuze’s emphasis on the radically *indeterminate* nature of the Bergsonian virtual becomes a political rallying cry in *A*

⁵⁵ Ibid. p.136.

⁵⁶ Ibid. p.136-7 original emphasis.

⁵⁷ Nik Farrel Fox, *The New Sartre*, (London: Continuum 2003), p.112.

⁵⁸ Guattari’s work on the concept ‘transversality’ as institutional critique at *La Borde* bears out this argument. Cf Félix Guattari, *Psychoanalysis and Transversality: Texts and Interviews*, trans. Ames Hodges (London: Semiotext(e) 2015; Paris: François Maspero 1972).

Thousand Plateaus - in a section titled “Memories of a Bergsonian”. Taking up Bergson’s emphasis on cross-species communication and genetic transfer, Deleuze and Guattari give an account of strategic alliances between organisms which dissolves the reductionist logic of categories (being) towards a becoming-other to those identities:

Becoming is not an evolution, at least not an evolution by descent and filiation. Becoming produces nothing by filiation: all filiation is imaginary. Becoming is always of a divergent order than filiation. It concerns alliance. If evolution includes any veritable becomings, it is in the domain of symbioses that bring into play beings of totally divergent scales and kingdoms, with no possible filiation. There is a block of becoming that snaps up the wasp and the orchid, but from which no wasp-orchid can ever descend [...]

Accordingly, the term we would prefer for this form of evolution between heterogeneous terms is ‘involution,’ on the condition that involution is in no way confused with regression. Becoming is involutionary, involution is creation.⁵⁹

This passage translates the Bergsonian concept of involution to describe the activity of chance encounters or events within the determinate structure of biological evolution. This closely mirrors Deleuze’s description over two decades earlier of “two types of division which must not be confused” where his ontology of intensive actualisation is opposed to the Kojèvean/Sartrean dialectic of negation and subsumption:

Now the process of realisation is subject to two rules, one of resemblance and another of limitation. For the real is supposed to be in the image of the possible which it realises. (It simply has existence or reality added to it, which is translated by saying that, from the point of view of the concept, there is no difference between the possible and the real.) [...] The virtual, on the other hand, does not have to be realised, but rather actualised; and the rules of actualisation are not those of resemblance and limitation, but those

⁵⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.263

of difference or divergence and of creation [...] While the real is in the image and likeness of the possible that it realises, the actual, on the other hand does *not* resemble the virtual that it embodies.⁶⁰

The chaotic virtual milieu differs *in kind* from the actual which materialises it in time and space and which contains this virtuality within itself as the tendency or potential of all systems towards entropic de-stratification (“absolute deterritorialization”).⁶¹ For Sartre, the labour or praxis of creativity is part of the process of realisation of various possibilities within the general situation of scarcity (negation merely selects which of these possibilities to realise). On the other hand, the Deleuzian actual is never realised as self-identical but instead carries within itself the virtual problems which define its systemic becoming in time and space but which are always open to radical decomposition (or deterritorialisation) back towards the virtual. Systemic, because things in themselves are already composites – multiplicities of elements in temporal duration – but which are open rather than closed systems.

This “carrying within itself” of the virtual within the actual is key to how Deleuze retains the role and function of critique in his positive concept of difference – as to how actual states of affairs are always threatened by radical decomposition—without recourse to negation as the primary motor of this critique.⁶² It therefore provides the point of rupture with Badiou, where Deleuze’s ontology is able to speak to universal givens and specific situations of social transformation at the same time. It offers us a line of flight out of the impasse suffered by postcolonial theory when it conceives of difference as both the negative cause of otherness and the very means by which said otherness is to be overcome.⁶³ The negativity of difference which Fanon inherits from Sartre as the

⁶⁰ Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, pp.95-97. Original emphasis.

⁶¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.63.

⁶² This is also present, for example, in Burns’ reading of Glissant’s “Poetics of the Chasmos” in terms of thinking postcoloniality beyond negation. See Burns, *Contemporary Caribbean Writing and Deleuze* pp.109-147.

⁶³ One finds this paradox in, for example, Bhabha, where ‘hybridity’ rendered as ontological lack is both the cause and solution to postcolonial non-being. See Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, (London: Routledge 1994; repr. 2004).

void of non-being leads him to the same problem of agency, articulated in a new way, which Deleuze's philosophy of immanence seeks to swerve. Dambudzo Marechera's novels *Black Sunlight* and *The Black Insider* similarly respond to this problem through an aesthetic praxis that continually seeks to swerve its non-being or otherness in relation to the "being of the centre" of the World-Literary system.

3.3. The neo-colonial subject: Deleuze and Fanon

The dialectic of being – non-being, which positions creative transformation within critical negativity leads to a (both literal and theoretical) poverty in Sartre, where being or identity requires nothingness, void and scarcity in order to function. This is analogous to Fanon's remarks in "On the Pitfalls of National Consciousness" where he castigates those bourgeois movements for national liberation in former colonies which only succeed in repeating the intellectual terms of the European enlightenment at the periphery: "In certain young states of Black Africa members of parliament, or even ministers, maintain without a trace of humour that the danger is not at all of a reoccupation of their country by colonialism but of an eventual invasion by 'those vandals of Arabs coming from the North'".⁶⁴ The aims of pan-African nationalism are for Fanon, writing at the beginning of the 1960's, still subject to the racialising discourses which attend the national consciousness of the European bourgeoisie and which retroactively determine their identity via a supposed "ethnic centre" threatened by its geographic and ontological borders:

Colonialism, which had been shaken to its very foundations by the birth of African unity, recovers its balance and tries now to break that will to unity by utilising all the movement's weaknesses. Colonialism will set the African peoples moving by revealing to them the existence of 'spiritual' rivalries [...] this religious tension may be responsible for revival of the commonest racial feeling. Africa is divided into Black and White, and the names that are

⁶⁴ Franz Fanon, "On the Pitfalls of National Consciousness", in *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington, (London: Penguin 2001; Paris: François Maspero 1961), p.131.

substituted – Africa south of the Sahara, Africa north of the Sahara – do not manage to hide this latent racism.⁶⁵

As well as being the negating force that destroys colonial rule, difference returns as that which threatens national unity conceived along racialised grounds. The *subject* of dialectical negation can only become conscious of itself via the recognition of what-it-is-not. So Fanon's statement in *Black Skin, White Masks* that "The Negro is not. Any more than the white man"⁶⁶ becomes prophetic for the way the dialectic of centre and periphery which characterised the emergence of bourgeois nationalism in various African states is compelled to seek out the non-being of difference as the very condition of its possibility. Despite this Fanon himself remains committed to a dialectics of negation derived from Sartre and, according to Neil Lazarus, "an alternative nationalist standpoint" tied to the existential humanism of the latter.⁶⁷ Or, as Simone Bignall observes:

For Fanon, the crux of the problem concerns the colonial imposition of a misrepresentative universality with the colonial construction of 'the Negro' as its object; it follows that only by asserting local cultures which affirm the dynamic particularity of positive, culturally defined black identities, will people oppressed by racism and colonialism break free from the terms of universal misrepresentation that have become the legacy of colonial discourse.⁶⁸

There remains an uncomfortable question as to how much the neo-colonialism Fanon diagnoses in *The Wretched of the Earth* has its roots in the very structures of critical negativity he brings to bear on imperial violence in *Black Skin, White Masks*. Homi Bhabha maintains that:

⁶⁵ Ibid. p.128-129.

⁶⁶ Franz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann, (London: Pluto Press 2008; Paris: Editions de Seuil 1952), p.180.

⁶⁷ Neil Lazarus, "Disavowing Decolonization: Fanon, Nationalism and the Question of Representation in Postcolonial Theory", in *Franz Fanon: Critical Perspectives*, ed. Anthony Alessandrini (London: Routledge 1999), p.162.

⁶⁸ Bignall, *Postcolonial Agency*, p.64.

Fanon is fearful of his most radical insights: that the space of the body and its identification is a representational reality; that the politics of race will not be entirely contained within the humanist myth of Man or economic necessity or historical progress, for its psychic effects question such forms of determinism; that social sovereignty and human subjectivity are only realisable in the order of Otherness.⁶⁹

Poststructuralist debates over the foundation of the subject in *lack* then become crucial for any articulation of a theory of decolonization which doesn't end up fixated on its own outsides – its own peripheries. Hélène Cixous summarises the restrictions and conditions placed on the role of difference in dialectical philosophy conceived under the structures of negation: “I saw that the great, noble, ‘advanced’ countries established themselves by expelling what was ‘strange’; excluding it but not dismissing it; enslaving it. A commonplace gesture of history: there have to be *two* races – the masters and the slaves.”⁷⁰ The enlightened, rational subject is conditional on the progressive recognition, cancellation and internalisation of its external limits under the dialectical model of centre and periphery through which globalised capitalism achieved (with the exception of the USSR and some other cases) hegemonic dominance in the 1960s and 70s. Bignall frames this dependency of the capitalist world-system on dialectical models of constitutive recognition and internalisation of non-being as a failure by Fanon to critique the very *forms* of human action available to the colonised; as a failure to think agency beyond negation:

Fanon wants recognition as a desiring subject, as a subject who transforms and possesses the material world through the act of negation. Thus, he cleaves the dialectical goal of reciprocal recognition between ‘freedoms as confronted freedoms’, with a Marxist inflection similar to Kojève and Sartre’s, which holds that subjects might acknowledge each other in terms

⁶⁹ Homi K. Bhabha, “Remembering Fanon: Self, Psyche, and the Colonial Condition”, in *Remaking History* ed. Barbara Kruger and Phil Mariani, (Seattle: Bay Press 1989), pp.142-3. First publ. in Franz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann, (London: Pluto Press 1986), pp.xxi-xxxvii.

⁷⁰ Hélène Cixous qtd. in Simone Bignall, *Postcolonial Agency: Critique and Constructivism*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2010), p.67.

of the negating agency each extends, upon each other and their world. [...] However, Fanon, like Sartre, does not challenge the character of this human agency or the nature of action associated with the dialectical verbs of recognition and negation.⁷¹

Whilst not directly engaged in this struggle, Deleuze's theorization of a difference-without-negation during this period has a direct bearing on the political and strategic crises suffered by decolonization movements in Africa in the mid-1960s.

For example, in his late essay on "Colonial War and Mental Disorders" Fanon moves away from the dialectical categories of coloniser-colonised and focuses on those displaced or indeterminate persons caught up in the Algerian war of independence as something more akin to an atmosphere or, in Foucault's language, a "thought from outside".⁷² An Algerian civilian begins to hear "all sorts of insults *coming from out of the night* and resounding in his head: 'traitor, traitor, coward... all your brothers who are dying, traitor'"⁷³ and is led to deceive the French police into thinking he is a member of the FLN in spite of himself. Trauma in this instance is less to do with a causal event, nor as something Fanon's patients are compelled to repeat in any Freudian sense, but as a wound which subsists and inheres in the experiential present as something which is always happening elsewhere or which is always about to happen. The event of colonisation is not something to be negated in order for the other to reach self-consciousness in their own right, but instead the anxiety of otherness comes from an always already being-spoken-for—as *ressentiment*. To this end, Lorna Burns has framed Albert Memmi's critique of the dialectical politics of postcolonial resentment—of being defined in relation to what one is not—along Deleuzian lines as an apparatus of capture:

The colonised self-assertion, born out of a protest, continues to define itself in relation to it. In the midst of revolt, the colonised continues to think, feel and live against and, therefore, in relation to the coloniser and colonization

⁷¹ Bignall, *Postcolonial Agency*, p.69.

⁷² Michel Foucault and Maurice Blanchot, *Michel Blanchot: The Thought From Outside*, trans. Jeffrey Mehlman and Brian Massumi (New York: Zone Books 1987; Montpellier: Éditions Fata Morgana 1986), p.7

⁷³ Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p.220. Emphasis added.

[...] In order to witness the colonised complete cure, his alienation must completely cease. We must await the complete disappearance of colonisation—including the period of revolt.⁷⁴

In focusing on those persons and bodies who exist in somewhat of a hybrid relation, an indeterminate position, to the traditional binary of coloniser-colonised, Fanon's essay anticipates the one which follows—"On The Pitfalls of National Consciousness"—where the affect of *ressentiment* is shown to be disastrous to newly independent or post-colonial nations. Howard Caygill notes this tension in Fanon, where colonial violence represents a strategic danger to anti-colonial resistance movements hastened to escalate the very violence which conditions their *ressentiment*:

The scenes of *ressentiment* and violence described by Fanon take place within and are aggravated by this scenario of escalating colonial enmity. Fanon, however, also emphasizes that this abstraction, this 'alienation' – to use the term in the psychiatric sense used in *Black Skin, White Masks* – is a product of specific historic processes. This is affirmed repeatedly throughout 'On Violence', perhaps most graphically in the expression that 'colonialism, as we have seen, is the organisation of a Manichean world, of a compartmentalised world'. The Manichean world, created by a mad God and policed by demonic forces, is the theatre of struggle between light and dark [...] Yet for Fanon, it is a world of alienation (in all senses of the word) created by colonial violence, an abstract violence that provokes responses which initiate a mutually destructive escalation.⁷⁵

Here the danger of *ressentiment* comes as it overdetermines national consciousness to become instead only a nationalism conceived in opposition to other (European) nationalisms.⁷⁶ Hatred of the coloniser is co-opted by those

⁷⁴ Albert Memmi, *The Coloniser and the Colonised*, (London: Earthscan Publications 2003), p.183-185. Emphasis added. See also Lorna Burns, "Postcolonial Singularity and a World Literature Yet to Come", *Angelaki: Journal of The Theoretical Humanities*, 20:4 (2015), pp.243-259.

⁷⁵ Howard Caygill, *On Resistance: A Philosophy of Defiance*, (London: Bloomsbury 2013), p.101.

⁷⁶ The structural role of the norm or standard which overdetermines other relations in the form of an axiom, is characterised of a majoritarian cultural formation.

bourgeois nationalisms intent on the restoration of capitalist modes of production. Writing six years after Fanon's essay on national consciousness and its limitations, Deleuze similarly writes of those schizoid-subjects or "mortally wounded" able to grasp "all violence in a single act of violence, and every mortal event in a single event which no longer makes room for the accident, and which denounces and removes the power of *ressentiment* in the individual as well as the power of oppression within society".⁷⁷ Aside from the fact that both Deleuze and Fanon were experimenting with serial forms of composition at around the same time, at the end of his life Fanon also anticipates the wider questions Deleuze and Guattari's political philosophy asks: how does one become revolutionary beyond the politics of negation and *ressentiment*?⁷⁸

I make this claim in spite of the obvious point that the exact opposite case has been made by, above all, Gayatri Spivak. In "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Spivak mirrors those criticisms put forth by Badiou in "The Facism of the Potato" – namely – that Deleuze and Guattari's theorization of a subject without dialectical negation or lack falls back on a Eurocentric, univocal conception of being:

When the connection between desire and the subject is taken as irrelevant or merely reversed, the subject-effect that surreptitiously emerges is much like the generalised ideological subject of the theorist. This may be the legal subject of socialised capital, neither labour nor management, holding a 'strong' passport, using a 'strong' or 'hard' currency, with supposedly unquestioned access to due process. It is certainly not the desiring subject as Other.⁷⁹

But this is only the case if one separates Deleuze and Guattari's theory of subject formation in *Anti-Oedipus* from their broader conception of difference as *ontologically* primary. For Spivak, given that difference is understood as the motor of dialectical becoming according to the tradition of Hegel, Kojève and Sartre,

⁷⁷ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, p.65; p.157.

⁷⁸ "Colonial War and Mental Disorders" is arranged in case-studies as 'Série A' 'Série B' etc. in the original French.

⁷⁹ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Nelson and Grossberg, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press 1988), p.273.

rejecting negation can only result in affirmation of the One. But “subject-effects” in *Anti Oedipus* are not so much dissolved in favour of chaotic or anarchic connections, so much as disaggregated amongst a range of pre-individual and relational concepts of identity-in-process. The question is not “how can we free difference from identity?” but “given that difference is given, how can we think consistency and individuation without falling prey to the identity of the subject?” This question follows logically even from Deleuze’s earliest work on David Hume – “we are habits, nothing but habits – the habit of saying I”⁸⁰. The effects of processes of individuation are never fully closed. The legal subject becomes by incorporating those bodies (such as female, black, homosexual bodies) that were previously invisible. This is a majoritarian structure. Becoming-minor entails a *qualitative* change in the makeup of any given assemblage. As Andrew Robinson and Simon Tormey point out, this is the “third” category of subjectivity which Spivak neglects in Deleuze and Guattari’s work:

In Deleuzian theory there is an ‘other’ of the neurotic ‘barred subject’. This other is the schizophrenic (or nomad, molecular becoming and so on). Yet the schizophrenic is also ‘divided’, cross-cut with flows, schizzes and multiple positions. In other words, Deleuze posits against the lacking divided self, not an undivided self, but a non-lacking divided-self.⁸¹

Spivak’s commitment to the constitutive lack at the core of subjectivity leads inevitably to problems of enunciation and representation – where the ability of the colonised class (i.e the negating class) cannot be assumed to be able to speak for themselves. As with Fanon, the subaltern is *not*.

The problem of difference for a postcolonial politics of negation after Spivak subsequently finds itself bound up in problems of authentic speech. This can be seen in, for example, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s turn away from writing novels in English –

⁸⁰ Gilles Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity: An Essay on Hume’s Theory of Human Nature*, trans. Constantin V. Boundas, (New York: Columbia University Press 1991; Paris: Presses Universitaires de France 1953), p.x.

⁸¹ Andrew Robinson and Simon Tormey, “Living in Smooth Space: Deleuze, Postcolonialism and the Subaltern” in *Deleuze and the Postcolonial*, ed. Simone Biganall and Paul Patton, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2010), p.35.

the effects of which he describes as “a cultural bomb” that “makes [the post-colonised] see their past as one wasteland of non-achievement and [that] makes them want to distance themselves from that homeland”.⁸² In former European colonies such as Kenya, Thiong’o argues:

Possibilities of triumph or victory are seen as remote, ridiculous dreams. The intended results are despair, despondency and a collective death-wish. Amidst this wasteland which it has created, imperialism presents itself as the cure and demands that the dependent sing hymns of praise with the constant refrain: ‘theft is holy’. Indeed, this refrain sums up the new creed of the neo-colonial bourgeoisie in many ‘independent’ African states.⁸³

Here Thiong’o’s antagonists are the same as those identified by Fanon in *The Wretched of The Earth* and against which he posits a cultural nationalism from below – as an antidote to the acquiescence of the former colony towards neo-imperialism and capitalist globalisation. Only through negation can postcolonial literature become the self-conscious expression of “a people”- rather than a subaltern class caught in the void of otherness. But the choice between writing in English or Gikuyu should, according to Deleuze, be seen as a false one—just as the choice between being and non-being, identity and difference, is undermined in *Bergsonism* as an inferior version of a more profound virtual difference. Post-independence African writers working in English like Dambduzo Marechera are, from Thiong’o’s perspective, slaves to the cultural paternalism implied by their tertiary use of a dominant language. On the contrary, I will make the case directly for Marechera as a writer whose aesthetic praxis can be read productively alongside a non-dialectical philosophy of postcolonial difference derived from Deleuze and Bergson. Rather than recovering a lost or forgotten identity through linguistic identity and national allegory, Marechera is a “language terrorist” whose work traces a line of flight out of both African and European national literatures. The novels *Black Sunlight* and *The Black Insider* have no national community of

⁸² Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*, (Oxford: Heinemann 1981), p.3.

⁸³ Ibid.

language users to speak of, and are therefore forced to carve out a space for creative experimentation with competing ideas of cultural belonging in language. The audience for *Black Sunlight* and *The Black Insider* are always “to come” in the manner Deleuze describes in minoritarian art practices.⁸⁴ The minor always works in the *le futur anterior*—that which *will have become*. Marechera’s texts are a difference engine which subtracts linguistic and metaphorical variations from Zimbabwean national consciousness, forcing them to take flight in a way that makes them imperceptible to the global signifying regime world literary theory. Marechera writes not “from” the periphery but *of* an intensive space of multiplicity – an intensive virtuality that continually escapes recognition and incorporation by the centre through the Bergsonian process of counter-actualisation.

3.4. Bergsonism in Harere: Dambudzo Marechera

Against Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's description of colonialism as a bomb – which transforms being into nothingness – Antonio Benítez Rojo speaks of a “bricolage” or “Caribbean machine” capable of repeating the catastrophe of Empire across several human and non-human strata in a global assemblage of expropriation, exchange and domination:

The flow of nature in [the Caribbean] was interrupted by the suction of an iron mouth, taken thence through a transatlantic tube to be deposited and redistributed in Spain. When I speak of nature in I do so in integral terms: Indians and their handicrafts, nuggets of gold and samples of other minerals, native species of plants and animals, and also some words like tabaco, canoa, hamaca etc [...] A machine of the same model [...] was installed in Puerto Rico, in Jamaica, in Cuba [...] a machine made up of a naval machine,

⁸⁴ “The literary-machine thus becomes the relay for a revolutionary machine-to-come, not at all for ideological reasons but because the literary machine alone is determined to fill the conditions of a collective enunciation that is lacking elsewhere in this milieu: *literature is the people's concern*”. Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature*, pp.17-18. Original emphasis.

a military machine, a bureaucratic machine, a political machine, a legal machine, a religious machine...⁸⁵

In contrast to earlier (dialectical) theorisations in the 1960's, Benitez-Rojo's description of a colonialism which reproduces itself in space and time as a machinic connection or modulation of elements across different series—bringing them together but also bifurcating them into new territories and strata—seems to have more in common with a globalised capitalism that contains multiple centres and peripheries. Benitez-Rojo is not attempting to reduce the significance of the human misery caused by colonisation, but to show how the catastrophe traverses linguistic, physical, psychological, economic and environmental systems as an assemblage of elements whose relations are structurally abstract but actualised in concrete, specific ways. Language makes smooth communication between local zones of accumulation and the economic centres of Europe and the US possible, but is *not* simply a mode of linguistic domination imposed on colonial subjects from without as it is for Thiong'o. As Benitez-Rojo makes clear, language as a repeating assemblage or strata of phonetic matter and written inscription belongs neither to the periphery or the centre, but is forever “in between” as a system in relative equilibrium but always open to transformation at any given point. This openness of language to internal transformation marks a distinction between earlier postcolonial writers such as Thiong'o, and writers such as Marechera who emerged *after* the movements for national liberation in Africa and elsewhere acquiesced to the soft power of global capitalist hegemony (rather than direct imperial conquest). Deleuze and Guattari's remark that “a minor literature doesn't come from a minor language” but something which happens *to* a major language, is especially instructive for understanding this shift.⁸⁶ If the abstract machine of colonisation (read: “combined and uneven development”) is *only* conceived as a system of oppositions (centre and periphery) which sustains itself via the ceaseless identification of its others, it will always appear as if the other is lacking the fullness of being that belongs to a linguistic subject (an *I*). But as a Bergsonian multiplicity or

⁸⁵ Antonio Benitez-Rojo, *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press 1997), pp.5-6.

⁸⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature*, p.16.

rhizome, language exceeds the dialectic of recognition and identity, instead becoming a plane or plateau through which the postcolonial writer can potentially escape the ceaseless demand to say “I”.

World-literary scholars have already attended to some of the epistemological failures of the dialectic of centre and periphery—Nirvana Tanouki calls for “a disciplinary critique of the concept of *scale*, which by necessity moves us away from metaphorical deployments of “space” toward concrete discussions about the materiality of literary landscapes”.⁸⁷ Tanouki argues that comparativist approaches tend to turn the objects of their attention into discursive problems with similar themes. Read *novelistically*, a contemporary African sculpture *Man with a Bicycle* “is turned into a sign of novelty by *a way of reading*, which not only pulls together identity and landscape [...] such that they become inextricable—but, more impressively, they mystify the [protagonist’s] journey, turning garb and transport into hurdles along his way”.⁸⁸ It is assumed by the comparativist that speaking in a language that is not one’s own, wearing American clothes and riding a machine born of capitalist modernity represent a series of identity crises the peripheral subject must overcome if they are truly to become a subject. Thus all narratives of the periphery begin to look similar in the way they are organised around the *problem* of periphery in relation to the centre, and the journey is made irrelevant so long as the figure coming over the horizon is a reflection of ourselves. Tanouki betrays her most radical insights, however, by neglecting the role of dialectics in this system. It is the tendency to reduce the singularity of postcolonial narratives to a structure of oppositions and antagonisms that introduces a false universalism to theories of World Literature—and which sacrifices the singular difference *between* peripheries themselves in the effort towards systemisation.

Metaphor has a specific role in this arrangement, as the stylistic device by which the postcolonial novel appears to communicate its form of “creativity under duress”.⁸⁹ Deleuze and Guattari are suspicious of metaphor for its Platonic

⁸⁷ Nirvana Tanouki, “The Scale of World Literature”, in *The Routledge Companion to World Literature*, (London: Routledge 2013), p.304.

⁸⁸ Ibid. p.305.

⁸⁹ Ibid. p.310.

associations, and this is borne out in the neoliberal appropriation of the term “World Literature” to mean an ideal sphere of discursive communication and identity politics in which all subjects are required to communicate.⁹⁰ Yet even though Deleuze and Guattari’s anxiety over metaphor has become synonymous with Kafka’s austere deterritorialisation of German (where extraneous metaphorical elements are subtracted as far as possible), we do find in *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature* allusion to a different direction of deterritorialisation based on the multiplication rather than subtraction of metaphorical elements. Set against the willed-poverty of Kafka, this literary maximalism would utilise “all the resources of symbolism, of oneorism, of esoteric sense, of the hidden signifier”.⁹¹ This is a style which Deleuze and Guattari will ultimately come to identify with James Joyce: “Joyce’s words, accurately described as having ‘multiple roots’, shatter the linear unity of the word, even of language, only to posit a cyclic unity of the text, sentence, or knowledge”.⁹² Through the repetition or multiplication of metaphor and image, the work loses its representational quality in a contrary but complimentary movement to Kafka. Instead of the singular world to be represented, in a novel like *Ulysses* we find only the multiplicity of images and perspectives without a subject position to unify or totalise them – the work *becomes* its own world.

It is through this maximalist mode of deterritorialisation I wish to read the novels of Dambudzo Marechera, where a transverse line connects the peripheries of Marechera’s 1980s Harare and Joyce’s 1920s Dublin that has been mistakenly and reductively described as a perverse “European” aspect of Marechera’s own style that prevents him developing a more fully “African” sensibility. In contrast to the subtractive method of deterritorialisation Deleuze and Guattari diagnose in

⁹⁰ For example: “World Literature encourages learners to explore literature from different countries and cultures. Through study of great novelists, poets and dramatists from around the world, learners acquire lifelong skills in interpreting and evaluating texts. They learn how to develop and communicate an informed personal response to literature.” Cambridge Assessment International Education, *Cambridge International General Certificate in Education: World Literature* (2016), <<http://www.cie.org.uk/programmes-and-qualifications/cambridge-igcse-world-literature-0408/>> [Accessed 25 April 2018].

⁹¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature*, p.19.

⁹² Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.6.

Kafka, Marechera's fictions aim to destroy metaphor *from the inside*. They conduct an immanent critique of the metaphorical image in parallel to that (I propose) undertaken by Deleuze and Guattari against psychoanalysis, in order to bring those concepts "to the point of auto-critique".⁹³ The novels *Black Sunlight* and *The Black Insider* are written (contra Kafka) almost entirely in metaphor. Rather than subjecting those metaphors to the dialectical play of antagonisms, however, the novels assemble metaphors in repeating series only to dissolve them, removing them from their context and thus resisting their systemisation into a postcolonial subject of enunciation. They are best read, therefore, by following a line of contagion between metaphorical series, through which they escape the supposed oppositional binary of the World-Literary centre and its peripheral other. These processes of contagion are, I argue, identical to Bergson's concept of creative involution – which Deleuze describes as "counter-actualisation" and which we have already encountered as the process of unbecoming.⁹⁴ Critique here has nothing to do with the negative, but instead requires that: "One has only to replace the actual terms in the movement that produces them to bring them back to the virtuality actualised in them, in order to see that differentiation is never a negation but a creation, and that difference is never negative but positive and creative".⁹⁵ This mode of critique has nothing to do with representing reality more accurately, but in resisting the spatial coordinates of the present state of things:

All our problems derive from the fact that we do not know how to go beyond experience [the actual] towards the conditions of experience [the virtual], towards the articulations of the real and rediscover the differences in kind in the composites that are given to us and on which we live.⁹⁶

As previously discussed, counter-actualisation is not required to go as far as dialectical opposition or antagonism (which would only trap such forms of critique in a structure of dependency) but remains open to the creative potential of chance and indeterminacy within the political. This movement from dialectical opposition

⁹³ Deleuze and Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus*, p.342. Translation modified.

⁹⁴ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, p.161.

⁹⁵ Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, p.103.

⁹⁶ Ibid. p.26.

to creative counter-actualisation is implicit, I will argue, in Marechera's theorisation that realism in African literature is the literary parallel to the Fanonian recognition of self-as-object associated with the colonised experience. The realism of, say, Chinua Achebe, becomes for Marechera an attempt to overcome this position of otherness by simply expanding the European category of subjectivity to include non-Europeans. Instead, Marechera is moved to ask— "how can Africa write as if that black Frenchman, Frantz Fanon, never existed[?]"⁹⁷ Fanon's dialectical model of the development of African literature in *The Wretched of the Earth* ultimately remains for Marechera wedded to a European (or Hegelian) mode of subjectivity. As David Pattison summarises, Fanon's dialectic of colonialism proceeds via:

The period of 'unqualified assimilation' in which the writer demonstrated a complete absorption of the culture of the occupying power; a second period in which those acquired values are questioned, a time nominated by Fanon as 'just-before-the-battle' (for independence, that is), before entering a third and, according to Fanon, final feature, the 'fighting phase' when the writer acts as 'awakener of the people' producing a revolutionary literature.⁹⁸

Pattison adds a fourth phase to this dialectic he terms "after the battle"⁹⁹ but this is to mis-register the attack on Fanonian dialectics conducted by novels such as *The Black Insider* and *Black Sunlight*. The processes of counter-actualisation at work in these texts cannot be understood via the hermeneutic terms given to them by the dialectic of centre and periphery that world literary theory retains and extends from earlier postcolonial critiques.

The role of the postcolonial text in narrating the nation against its overdetermination by a European bourgeois tradition, is upheld in world-literary studies by Casanova, who writes of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* that it was: "at once a realist, didactic, demonstrative and national novel [the aim of which] was

⁹⁷ Dambudzo Marechera, "The African Writer's Experience of European Literature", *Zambezia* XIV:2 (1987), p.100.

⁹⁸ David Pattison, "Call No Man Happy: Inside the Black Insider, Marechera's Journey to Become a Writer?", *Journal of South African Studies* 20:2 (2007), p223.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

to provide Nigeria with a national history and to teach this history to the people.”¹⁰⁰ The *people* here are understood in the manner of Kojève’s dialectic, whose coming-to-consciousness rests on the recognition of themselves as other—as the agents of dialectical history. But for Deleuze the true revolutionary path is the endless deferment of this identitarian moment, where no mediation or synthesis is possible or required. Whereas the dialectic merely reveals that the other was a subject all along, becoming is always in service of a schizoid or minor “people yet to come” that never settles on a subject position.¹⁰¹ This important difference, between the extensive spaces of national literatures and the emergent processes through which a landscape, or a body, becomes territorialised in the production of space, is erased by Casanova.¹⁰² This results in a conflation in her work between the national politics of peripheral countries and narrative as the ersatz form of expression for this politics. As Lorna Burns argues:

[Casanova] traces a trajectory that begins with a direct relation between politics and literature. In this first moment, the close connection between literature and politics is expressed through texts that are distant from literary modernity: they use conservative narrative forms like realism and are thus vulnerable to political and nationalist appropriation [...] the literature of the centre, on the other hand, is one that is expressly depoliticised and in it we will find “the almost complete disappearance of popular national themes, the appearance of ‘pure’ writing—texts that, freed from the obligation to help to develop a particular national identity, have no social or political ‘function’ [...] The sleight of hand here is one that conflates politics with nationalism. Experimental or otherwise innovative literatures, by the same token, [are apolitical according to Casanova] because as redefinitions of what constitutes modernity they belong to the autonomous literary space.”¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*. p.196.

¹⁰¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature*, p.18.

¹⁰² In fact her argument rests on the dubious assumption that Deleuze and Guattari mistranslate *kleinen literaturen* as ‘minor literature’ when in fact the concept is entirely their own. C.f Chapter 1. I use the term ‘body’ in the Spinozist sense to mean a field of pre-personal forces.

¹⁰³ Lorna Burns, “Postcolonial Singularity and a World Literature Yet to Come”, p.248.

In this arrangement, the novels of a writer such as Dambudzo Marechera become imperceptible due to the combination of their peripheral status in respect to the European modernist centre, their highly experimental or anti-realist narrative form and their antagonism towards national allegory. Moreover, this becoming-imperceptible is not metaphorical but *literal*.

Marechera's sporadic publishing history is documented by his biographer, Flora Veit-Wild, who recounts that Heinemann's reader in Nairobi found *Black Sunlight* "Too nihilistic, his avant-garde style of writing not 'African', and thus probably not suitable for [Heinemann's African Writer's Series]."¹⁰⁴ Moreover, the version of *The Black Insider* eventually published in 1990 is reconstructed by Heinemann from Marechera's posthumous manuscripts and incunabula, whilst eliminating the many instances of recurrence and duplication in these texts "in order to avoid repetition".¹⁰⁵ This is not to say that Marechera's personality or ego were underserved by his various publishers, but to suggest that Marechera's praxis is better understood as writing-machine in which the politics of (postcolonial) identity are simultaneously what Deleuze refers to as an "extra-textual effect" (i.e. a practical question of the novel and its readers) and a problem of textual pragmatics—of how the politics of language subsists beneath and between the subjects we "are".¹⁰⁶ Seeing the texts as an assemblage in this way skewers the problematic emphasis on hermeneutics left behind by discourse analysts in postcolonial studies, where despite a Derridean attention to the impossibility of meaning and identity, the world is still *positionally* that of a discursive object awaiting recognition. As Benita Parry writes:

Those who have been or are still engaged in colonial struggles against contemporary forms of neo-colonialism could well read the theorizing of discourse analysts with considerable disbelief [at their] incuriosity about the

¹⁰⁴ Flora Veit-Wild, "Introduction" in Dambudzo Marechera, *The Black Insider*, (London: Lawrence and Wishart 1992), p.15.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. p.19

¹⁰⁶ Gilles Deleuze qtd. in Daniel Smith "Introduction" to Gilles Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press 1997; Paris: Les Editions de Minuet 1993), p.xvi.

enabling socio-economic and political institutions and other forms of social praxis.¹⁰⁷

Black Sunlight was at the same time caught within a state apparatus hostile to critiques of Zimbabwean nationalism and an institutional publishing machine aiming to promote “African literature” as a more or less homogenous antidote to the European canon. The idea that there might exist a greater degree of difference, for instance, between Marechera and Chinua Achebe than between Marerchera and Joyce was therefore uncomfortable to almost all concerned. Against the literary politics of narration or allegory, which always need a complimentary movement in society to “complete” them, Marechera’s writing-machine, whose stylistics and experimental prose form draws passages of escape out of the condition of postcolonial *ressentiment*, must fundamentally be understood as, in and of itself, a social praxis.

Where World-Systems theory has thus far only interpreted the *extensive* spatial properties of textual representation (with concurrent emphasis on the novel form and its historical relationship to the emergence of the legal subject), Deleuze’s non-dialectical philosophy opens up a textual pragmatics (latterly schizoanalysis) the aim of which is to map the *intensive* material ground of collective enunciation. The book-as-assemblage replaces the dialectical and phenomenological book-as-image-of-the-world:

There is no difference between what a book talks about and how it is made. Therefore a book also has no object. As an assemblage, a book has only itself, in connection with other assemblages and in relation to other bodies without organs. We will never ask what a book means, as a signified or signifier; we will not look for anything to understand it. We will ask what it functions with, in connection with what other things it does or does not transmit intensities, in what other multiplicities its own are inserted and

¹⁰⁷ Benita Parry, *Postcolonial Studies: A Materialist Critique*, (London: Routledge 2004), p.26.

metamorphosed, and with what other bodies without organs it makes its own converge. *A book exists only through the outside and on the outside.*¹⁰⁸

The book-as-assemblage acts directly on semiotic flows *as material flows* without the need for a subject position which organises them into a totality. *Black Sunlight* is an imaging machine whose metaphors detach from their referent, such that a zone of indetermination passes between the object and the subject without falling back on a world or totality that would organise them into a binary opposition. The perceiving body or self in Marechera's work is reduced to the trace or stain left by an encounter between affective forces: "the amount of blood that shrieked out left a large stain on the asphalt"; "A stain of horror inside me, an inky blackness, stretched tightly across the sky"; "as she sipped her tea I imagined for one ghastly moment that I could actually see (as she swallowed it) the tea going down into her like one ever-growing brown stain so pale and pink was her beaux-arts frock".¹⁰⁹ The narrator-function as a recording surface or trace-effect allows Marechera to repeatedly transgress the representational boundaries of text/world, subject/object, inside/outside such that affectual connections between images *precede* the desiring subject, and perceptual phenomena are projected onto the external world—as percepts. This is evidenced in the way the photojournalist protagonist is gradually replaced by his camera, both metaphorically and syntactically:

Everywhere, the battle for an instant paused. Then, rage, yells, a series of shots, unbelieving screams. Through the camera lens the whole thing writhed like a jackal biting through its own trapped leg. I had the camera on my right shoulder. I felt absolutely nothing. I had actually become the camera itself, shooting the human spectacle before me.¹¹⁰

Whilst this becoming is superficially self-conscious (it is represented to us via the first person) by the end of the novel the disjunctive serialisation of images no

¹⁰⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.4. Emphasis added.

¹⁰⁹ Dambudzo Marechera, *Black Sunlight*, (Oxford: Heinemann 1980), p.15; p.81; p.68.

¹¹⁰ Marechera, *Black Sunlight*, p.32.

longer happens from the perspective of a subject who experiences them, nor from an objective whole able to totalise them into a world – the becoming is groundless:

Utterly outside himself. The ice and the snow. The heat and the sands.
Utterly outside. Himself. Shriekily held down by Susan. To remember.
Perhaps snatch a victory. But the armed lorries of language. Their articulate
cartridges. With axes to confirm them. Reason and knowledge the bodies in
the mass graves. Meaning killed by utterance.¹¹¹

The values of the European Enlightenment are not to be mourned or recovered in some dialectical victory, but instead registered as *at the same time* the very condition of colonial violence—a subjective void which cannibalises its own frontiers. This puts *Black Sunlight* at odds with the prevailing tendency in African publishing at the time of Zimbabwe’s independence, aimed at establishing Africa as a valid representational space for the human sciences—shown in the primacy given to Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* in Heinemann’s African Writers Series.¹¹² James Currey, the series editor who brought *The Black Insider* manuscripts to Heinemann’s attention, comments that Achebe “seamlessly uses Igbo phrases in his apparently English English”.¹¹³ If this linguistic hybridity is seamless, it is because it narrates a previously peripheral culture from a perspective of centrality — it transforms the other into a subject capable of enunciation. Hybridity is tied to the encounters between cultures at the periphery, but what returns from that encounter is essentially the same discursive basis for culture itself. Bhabha refers to this kind of hybridity as “the process of the *enunciation* of culture as *knowledgable*, authoritative, adequate to the construction of systems of cultural identification” and contrasts it to “cultural diversity [as] an epistemological concept—culture as an object of empirical knowledge [...and] the recognition of pre-given cultural contents and customs; held in the timeframe of relativism it gives rise to liberal notions of multiculturalism, cultural exchange of the exchange of humanity”.¹¹⁴ Nevertheless,

¹¹¹ Marechera, *Black Sunlight*, p.87.

¹¹² Achebe also served as the series’ editorial advisor from 1962 until 1972, subsequently becoming the “founding editor”, See James Currey, *Africa Writes Back: The African Writers Series and the Launch of African Literature*, (Oxford: James Currey 2008), p.27.

¹¹³ Ibid. p.42.

¹¹⁴ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p.34. Original emphasis.

Bhabha's concept of hybridity—of the differential genesis of culture—still shares some characteristics with cultural diversity as an extensive multiplicity (as the difference “between” two things) in its thinking about space:

The problem of cultural interaction emerges only at the signifiatory boundaries of cultures, where meanings and values are (mis)read or signs are misappropriated. Culture only emerges as a problem, or a problematic, at the point at which there is a loss of meaning in the contestation and articulation of everyday life, between classes, genders, races, nations.¹¹⁵

The intensive redistribution of sense (or cultural regimes of signification) remains subject to the extensive and dialectical categories of centre and periphery. The revolutionary potential of postcolonial writing (of “limit-texts”) therefore exists for Bhabha in “the moment of enunciation” in which they operate and which is exemplified by *Things Fall Apart*.¹¹⁶ But Bhabha's focus on discursive enunciation, on culture's role in *communicating* something about the body which speaks, also has the effect of transforming an intensive multiplicity (which divides only by changing in kind) into a *minority* (in the sense Deleuze and Guattari distance themselves from) which exists as a special category of subjectivity. Once otherness is recognised qua the Other, it becomes something about which we can speak—as something which “is not”. The dialectic compels the other to speak, or at least demands that enunciation is *the* problem of periphery, whence all that the subaltern lacks is authentic communication. As discussed earlier in relation to the Hegelian legacy in postcolonial studies, the idealism inherent in this formulation needs to be contrasted with Deleuze's materialist understanding of the pre-cultural and non-enunciate politics of assemblages:

An assemblage, in its multiplicity, necessarily acts on semiotic flows, material flows, and social flows simultaneously [...] There is no longer a tripartite division between a field of reality (the world) and a field of representation (the book) and a field of subjectivity (the author). Rather, an

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. pp.24-25.

assemblage establishes connections between certain multiplicities drawn from each of these orders, so that a book has no sequel nor the world as its object nor one or several authors as its subject. In short, we think that one cannot write sufficiently in the name of an outside. The outside has no image, no signification, no subjectivity. The book as assemblage with the outside, against the book as image of the world.¹¹⁷

Deleuze borrows this concept of the outside from Blanchot, as the fundamentally non-discursive and non-human basis of language (“In the work man speaks, but the work gives voice in man to what does not speak: to the unnameable, the inhuman, to what is devoid of truth, bereft of justice, without rights”) but a parallel exists with the Bergsonian virtual as *inorganic* life.¹¹⁸ An assemblage is composed of both extensive and intensive forces, but creative potential is never drawn solely from the encounter between extensive peripheries. Spatial concepts of hybridity, periphery and extensity rely on a dogmatic image of the world or the subject which pre-exist them and in which they find their logical answer. Cultural difference for Bhabha always returns to the subject as the problem to be solved, just as Achebe’s hybrid signifiers always come to rest on the figure of the human or person who experiences the world as if it was made *for them*. Hence the book-as-assemblage is oriented against the concept of totality which theories of World Literature posit as their transcendent concept, and which consequently undermines the question of how to systematise the relation between specific and universal. In their refusal of the world (or the world made of subjects) Marecehera’s texts are composed of fragmented images and metaphors that detach from their referent, forming an assemblage that is not reducible to interpretation or enunciation. As gestured towards in my first chapter, perhaps the idea of the work-as-machinic assemblage continues to discomfort literary studies for the way in which it makes interpretation (but not reading) redundant as a critical exercise.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. p.23.

¹¹⁸ Maurice Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press 1982; Paris: Éditions Gallimard 1955), p.232.

What emerges from *Black Sunlight* and *The Black Insider* is in fact an entire logic of metaphor that is non-representational, fulfilling Deleuze and Guattari's injunction against metaphor by taking metaphor itself to its limit. In the opening chapter of *Black Sunlight*, the narrator's escape from a racist caricature of an African chief takes the form of a Conradian journey:

I willed my heart of darkness to stop wheezing horror – horror [...] the yell seemed to explode from all directions. I was the pieces of its shrapnel flying lethally everywhere at once. My head was one huge madness showering rubble in their faces shouting hoarsely, tigerishly: 'we are all brothers! WE ARE ALL BROTHERS!'¹¹⁹

But the identification with the European subject (Conrad's Marlow) is then displaced onto the shrapnel, as that force-from-outside which both lacerates the narrator's body and somehow constitutes him. Christian is drawn to the outside, to the complicity of his own body in inorganic matter, as a mode of de-subjectification. By substituting the vehicle of the metaphor for its tenor, the text resists interpretation in favour of something closer to what Jean-Jacques Lecercle calls "a melting pot of unordered elements".¹²⁰ This indeterminate distribution of sense affects the novel at the level of style, where metaphor becomes a kind of difference-engine:

One! Two! Three! Four! ... Eleven! Twelve! Go back to your seat! I was hot with resentment and pain. So this was school. From all sides my head was being jammed with facts [...] A truckload of soldiers roared past. All their intensions were left hanging in the air like dust long after they were gone. They were there in the classroom with us, marshalling facts, categorising, reciting, and absorbing the knowledge handed down through the ages. All

¹¹⁹ Marechera, *Black Sunlight*, pp.9-10.

¹²⁰ Jean-Jacques Lecercle, *Deleuze and Language*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan 2002), p.58. Traditionally metaphors are considered to have two parts: the tenor to which attributes are ascribed and the vehicle from which attributes are borrowed and re-ascribed. See I.A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1965).

these meanings that had a hard and unyielding face! How did one escape?"¹²¹

The passage resembles a dream not simply via vague expressionism, but in pairing together heterogeneous elements (numbers, schools, soldiers, intentions, faces) where each image has its own relationship to the others and is not subject to any pre-existing psychological reality. But this dream has nothing to do with Freudian psychology (which reduces the metaphor to symptom) but is instead pure surface. The text becomes depthless at the same time as the heterogeneous series of images form their own internal logic in which the state becomes indistinguishable from the school, and meanings become indeterminable. Signifying slippage and representational decomposition are two of the primary ways in which both *Black Sunlight* and *The Black Insider* corrode the distinction between subject and world, inside and outside, replacing those binaries with a dream-logic of simulacra:

Dreams belong to a region of pure similitude. Everything in a dream is an appearance, every element is another element, is similar to it, and to yet another [...] you may look for the origin, for the model; you would like to be referred to a starting point, an initial revelation, but there is no such thing: dream is merely similitude that endlessly refers to similitude.¹²²

As Lecercle notes, the logic of dreams and nonsense shares an affinity with the concept of assemblage, as a groundless becoming that is non-representational and has no need for the totality of a world. Marechera's image-machines are endlessly frustrating to the comparativist reader that seeks in them the symptoms of periphery and the discursive crises of colonisation. The guerrilla linguistics employed in *Black Sunlight*, via the tactics of nonsense such as paranomasia and portmanteau, destabilises the spatial categories of centre and periphery and collapses the gap between text and world: "The essence of radical nonsense lies there: in the destabilisation of our idealised represented reality by the shocking incoherence and brutal actuality of assemblages."¹²³ Marechera's fictions are in this

¹²¹ Marechera, *Black Sunlight*, p. 17.

¹²² Maurice Blanchot qtd. in Lecercle, *Deleuze and Language*, p.59.

¹²³ Ibid. 60.

sense anti-novels for the way in which they utilise dream-logic against the world-as-representation and, being pure surface, have no need for interpretation to re-introduce a totalising perspective outside of them. They are indifferent to interpretation, obscuring as much as they illuminate: a black sunlight. This dream-work has no latent European subject or consciousness waiting in the wings to be ushered in (as in dialectics) but is instead a schizophrenic movement, signifying nothing but itself. As an assemblage it has no other, but instead shows the other to be an effect of the colonising gaze of the subject. From the point of view of the dialectical legacy in postcolonial studies, this indifference to otherness and the labour of the peripheral author to overcome that crisis was uncomfortable (as Marechera's publishers both in Africa and Europe discovered).

Here we can draw the parallel directly between Deleuze's non-dialectical philosophy of difference and Marechera's relationship to Chinua Achebe as the African novelist whose work is addressed to the dialectical problem of African modernity. Where Achebe's realism is a negation of the being of European modernism opposed to the non-being of the colonised body, Marechera's anti-realism escapes interpretation as national allegory. An affinity with Fanon's late work emerges here between Deleuze and Marechera, where all three are sceptical of the dialectical politics of national liberation. The difficulty Heinemann had in establishing Marechera as the voice of Zimbabwean independence (in the manner Achebe became for Nigeria) was, I would argue, a result of the stylistic politics of *Black Sunlight* as much as his reputation as an *enfant terrible*. The effects of the novel's serial or machinic style on the reading body (to which Heinemann's reviewers attested) were at the same time "plugged into" the bureaucratic and institutional machinery of Zimbabwe's transition to post-colonisation.¹²⁴ André Astow comments that:

The leadership of the nationalist movement in Zimbabwe was never able to fight consistently against imperialism. The leadership always attempted to constrain the struggle of the African people. As the anti-imperialist

¹²⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature*, p.41.

movement developed, the leadership understood that its interests could be defended only through compromise with imperialism. This was not merely the result of the narrow class interests of the petit-bourgeois leadership.

The political program of the nationalist movement was a clear expression of the petit-bourgeois politics dominating the movement as a whole.¹²⁵

Marechera shares with Fanon an anxiety over the dispersive quality of this failure – the fact that compromise or integration with neo-colonial forms of geopolitical structures such as the World Bank immediately following or in some cases preceding Zimbabwe’s official independence, did not appear to come from hierarchical structures of power in the movement itself nor from “the people” as a mass political subject either. Thus the crisis in movements for national liberation required a radical rethinking of the manner in which difference was conceived as the groundwork for postcolonial negation. This was the philosophical and political problem which Fanon intuited in 1961 and which, four years later, Deleuze diagnosed as the minor line connecting Spinoza, Nietzsche and Bergson (but also Kafka, Melville and Carmelo Bene).¹²⁶

Against the emphasis placed on the problem of enunciation and the apparent impossibility of authentic subaltern speech by postcolonial thinkers such as Bhabha and Spivak, *Black Sunlight’s* imaging-machine works in series, establishing connections between heterogeneous assemblages of semiotic and material components:

I closed my mouth tightly like a man who has much to say. The grape was bitter on the tongue. The whole nation was a desert parked solid in a ripe grape that was bursting with decadent but sweet liquid [...] There was nothing left but the polished desert of the floor. On which I walked towards Devil’s End. The spots of blood were turning into poems that blinded anyone who looked at them without a smoked glass. [...] A republic of deadly

¹²⁵ André Astow, *Zimbabwe: A Revolution That Lost Its Way?*, (London: Zed Books 1983), pp.215-216.

¹²⁶ Spivak and others are perhaps right to criticise Deleuze for, in this sense, returning the problem to the European tradition, but this is partially rectified by his wide-ranging emphasis on minor cinema beyond Europe and the US in *Cinema II*.

bacillus was lurking at the cemetery gate. Synonyms came out of the barn with a mass of snakes at their heels. The world was like an invisible bandage around their language".¹²⁷

These fragments establish a zone or relay between human and non-human signifiers that overwhelms consciousness—the narration becomes an imaging-machine. The images undergo an intensive reduction that collapses the representational gap between the text and the world. Instead, the text *becomes* its own space of potentiality. Deleuze and Guattari identify this compositional strategy as one of the markers of minor literature—an a-signifying rupture ignored by their readers in world literary theory:

There is no longer a designation of something by means of a proper name, nor an assignation of metaphors by means of a figurative sense. But images, the thing no longer forms anything but a sequence of intensive states, a ladder or a circuit for intensities that one can make race around in one sense or another, from high to low, or from low to high. The image is this very race itself; it has become becoming.¹²⁸

In place of the cogito, the camera lens becomes a surrogate recording surface for the inscription and organisation of images according to intensive multiplicity. This is made explicit in the narrator's encounter with his predecessor and doppelganger at Devil's Peak: a photojournalist who, angering the group's Colonel Kurtz or Andreas Baader-like leader, has his camera lenses welded onto his own eyes. A perverse literalisation of the character's own machinic-becoming, the doppelganger is a malign deterritorialisation, which ends in the black hole of anti-production (he is fixed to the wall of the cave). This is the fascistic pole of absolute deterritorialisation Marechera sketches when the Black Sunlight Organisation turns to terrorism to achieve their ends, when those movements or struggles for decolonization turn to militarism after being betrayed by post-independence Zimbabwe's secession to the colonial state-form. Already in 1964, Guattari warns

¹²⁷ Marechera, *Black Sunlight*, pp.74-75.

¹²⁸ Ibid p.22.

this is the inevitable result when a minoritarian or group-subject learns they are in fact not the revolutionary subject of history—presciently (yet unknowingly) describing the psychology of the Italian Red Brigades whose campaigns in the 1970s led to the wrongful arrest of his close friend, Antonio Negri.¹²⁹

The imaging-machines at work in *Black Sunlight* and in *The Black Insider* construct an assemblage or bricolage of elements that must be seen as materials in themselves, and whose a-signifying movement rejects the category of otherness as their organising principle.¹³⁰ Non-being is no longer a void as it was for Fanon, but instead a reservoir of fragments and partial images closer to the concept of the abstract machine and its predecessor in Artaud, the body without organs:

Subtract a man from himself and all you've got is just a shadow' he said looking pointedly at me. 'Chip away at the marble, down to the substance that holds the core together. There, we are mere abstractions. Ephemeral Macbeth travelled in that region. Caligula too. [...] In this room, each one has his own way of doing it. It's not so much that every man is not an island as what intercourse can two heaps of putrid clay and crumbling bones hold together? The organs of sense are destroyed, the eyes eaten out, the heart black and without emotion, the intellect perished. It is in the corpse at our feet that we see the evidence of our destiny.'¹³¹

Black Sunlight and *The Black Insider* frequently draw upon images of decay, decomposition and the entanglement of the body in its own objectivity that were a source of anxiety for Fanon—a sign of colonial violence—but which are transformed in Marechera as affirmation of the complicity of bodies with the

¹²⁹ "The calling of the Subject-group to speak tends to compromise the status and security of the group's members. There thus develops a kind of vertigo, or madness peculiar to this group. A kind of paranoid contraction is substituted for this calling to be subject: the group would like to be subject at any cost, including being in the place of the other, and in this way, it will fall into the worst alienation, the kind that is at the origin of all the compulsive and mortiferous mechanisms employed by religious, literary, and revolutionary coteries." Guattari, "The Transference" in *Psychoanalysis and Transversality*, p.78.

¹³⁰ The translation of 'agencement' has a vexed history in the secondary literature, 'assemblage' having associations with fixity or structure that go against the purpose of the concept. I substitute bricolage in this instance for that reason.

¹³¹ Marechera, *The Black Insider*, pp.104-105.

outside, the non-human or matter-in-itself *independently* of the presence of the subject. Contrary to the “seamless” World-English of Achebe and others, Marechera’s texts are nothing but seems: intensive ruptures and differential series without centres. In linking together metaphors in series that lose sight of their referent, of the “world” or “truth”, resonances occur between them which cohere in that they produce sense, but only to themselves and of themselves. They become a world at the same time as they take flight from the actual world in a disjunctive synthesis; a line of flight. Referring to Walt Whitman, Deleuze likens the disjunctive synthesis to a dry-stone wall (“The world as a collection of heterogeneous parts: an infinite patchwork, or a limitless wall of dried stones”) in which each fragment is irreducible to a totality that would exist outside of itself.¹³² Like Bergson’s line that divides only by changing in kind, whose movements follow an aberrant logic, Marechera’s novels destabilise not only the dialectic of centre and periphery, but the relations between multiple peripheries as well. Becoming instead an intensive cartography that carves a schizoid line across the Earth, cutting across territories in a way that has nothing to do with narrating “a people”, but draws lines of filiation between divergent postcolonial realities. Instead of “coming home” to the subject of enunciation, *Black Sunlight* and *The Black Insider* put the question of subjectivity into an endless variation, a line of flight, or traveling that is not a relation between geographic points or frontiers but always “in the middle”.¹³³ In *Black Sunlight*, Christian glimpses this line of flight as a kind of running or movement without a geography, or as an indeterminate process that dissolves the geographies of colonial violence:

The escapee. The scapegoat. The fiery bundle of fur streaking through ripe fields of wheat. There is always somebody on the run. From weird judges, fucking pigs, filthy neighbours, from the shit inland revenue, the brutal Special Branch, from the Man in the camouflage uniform, from the Man behind the riot shield, from the scandalised husband, the embittered

¹³² Deleuze, “Whitman”, in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, p.57.

¹³³ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.27.

mistress, from the ugly face of tradition, the back of a bus face of slogans. It flashed right through me, the history of the Runner.¹³⁴

Instead of the movement from centre to periphery and back, Deleuze's nomad or Marechera's runner is precisely one who does not move, but by a ceaseless becoming-other empties geography of its content. "To flee" or take flight, argues Deleuze, is "not exactly to travel, or even to move, because flights can happen on the spot, in motionless travel".¹³⁵ Everywhere *Black Sunlight* encounters an architecture of totality or transcendence (such as the Cathedrals) it disseminates it into rubble; a collection of stones organised only by their differentiation and to which Devil's End is the primary example—a rocky outcrop of stone portals, a system of caves which appears to grow in all directions. If there is in fact a relationship between Marechera and Kafka, it is the desire to create a burrow in the middle of the cathedral.

Marechera's texts open a passage or burrow out of the trap of subjectivity, a line of flight based on his anti-representational style and the non-discursivity of rubble, ranged against the politics of postcolonial world building and which Julia Kristeva has called "the power of horror" or abjection:

The abject is not an ob-ject facing me, which I name or imagine. Nor is it an ob-jest, an otherness ceaselessly fleeing in a systematic quest of desire.

What is abject is not my correlative, which, providing me with someone or someone else as support, would allow me to become more or less detached and autonomous. The abject has only one quality of the object – that of being opposed to 'I'. If the object, however, through its opposition, settles me within the fragile texture of a desire for meaning [...] what is *abject*, on the contrary, the jettisoned object, is radically excluded and draws me towards the place where meaning collapses.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ Marechera, *Black Sunlight*, p.9.

¹³⁵ Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues II*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson, Barbara Habberjam and Elliot Ross Albert, (London: Continuum 2002; Paris: Flammarion 1977), p.28.

¹³⁶ Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez, (New York: Columbia University Press 1982; Paris: Éditions de Seuil 1980), pp.1-2.

Kristeva's critique is launched from within the standpoint of a postcolonial ethics, where the wound or abjection is a refusal of worldliness – the refusal of identity, of subjectivity, of enunciation and exchange. The images of abjection in *Black Sunlight* occupy a similar structural position to what Deleuze describes as “the diagram” in Francis Bacon's paintings: “It is as if, in the midst of the figurative and probabilistic givens, a catastrophe overcame the canvas [like] the emergence of another world”.¹³⁷ As a mode of composition, the diagram or abjection-image is an a-signifying wound which collapses the extensive or representational capacity of the work into pure affect. In Marechera's texts this occurs when the prose collapses the apparent gap between signifier and signified, becoming instead pure noise—an intensity. This has nothing to do with dialectical negation, but instead is a potentiality which subsists across the surface of the text or canvas—a deterritorialisation can happen at the centre as much as at the periphery. For this reason, what Kristeva calls the abjection-image, Deleuze the disjunctive synthesis, or Francis Bacon the “wound”—is extra-territorial in the same way that a wound is both “of” the surface of a body (it “holds” two surfaces or pieces of skin together) and an intensive rupture to that surface (it opens a gap to the corporeal depths below). The wound is not a body or space so much as an intensive difference that makes the idea of a body possible—by holding the gap between bare flesh, meat and organs and the surface or skin we think of as *a* person together. In the same way the border, periphery or frontier is not simply the edge of a territory so much as an intensive line that makes the concept of a territory, state or nation possible. As Thomas Nail argues:

The “in-betweenness” of the border is not a lack or absence. The border is an absolutely positive and continuous process of multiplication by division—the more it divides social space the more it multiplies it. It is thus important to distinguish between two kinds of division: extensive and intensive. The first kind of division (extensive) introduces an absolute break—producing two quantitatively separate and discontinuous entities. The second kind of

¹³⁷ Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith, (London: Continuum 2003; Paris: Éditions de la Difference 1981), p.100.

division (intensive) adds a new path to the existing one like a fork or bifurcation producing a qualitative change in the whole continuous system [...] Although borders are typically understood according to the extensive definition, this is only a relative effect of the intensive kind of division.¹³⁸

When theories of World Literature remain tied to a Cartesian conception of spatial politics (where space is only a “container” of elements rather than an effect which has to be produced) this belies an extensive geometry which is the precisely the spatial logic of the state. As in Casanova, the whole is posited *before* the particular to which it is only an after effect. In Marechera, writing intensively (a becoming) entails the destruction of the logic of centre and periphery at the same time as a new world is constructed from the fragments that is less the dialectical narration of a national consciousness than the expression of “a people yet to come”.¹³⁹

Where the discipline of World Literature in its increasingly liberal guise concerns itself with “our” world or “this” Earth, Marechera's writing-machine confronts us with *differential* worlds or assemblages beyond the human. If as Nirvana Tanouki argues the problem of the postcolonial novel is to locate being, subjectivity or enunciation at the frontier, Marechera's fictions recompose the question as one that concerns the centre as much as the periphery: “how do we become postcolonial in a way which does not return us to the (white, European) subject of modernity?” The thought of abjection, of the non-human, is therefore *not* the same as the thought of *the* other at all, but an affect which empties our ideas of subjectivity, humanity, identity of their positive content. To (un)become postcolonial is at the same time then an un-worlding that makes Marechera a fellow conspirator with the Deleuze that once dared to suggest “a world without others”.¹⁴⁰ Following Benitez Rojo's concept of the colonising machine, it must be said that colonialism is less a historical structure that effects our experience of the world than a fully *ontological* structure or principle of organisation which creates qualitatively *different* worlds. For Marechera, the colonising machine is a fissure

¹³⁸ Thomas Nail, *Theory of the Border*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2016), p.3.

¹³⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature*, p.18.

¹⁴⁰ Gilles Deleuze, “Michel Tournier and the World Without Others”, in *The Logic of Sense*, pp.341-358.

rather than a quantitative shift: an atemporal wound which disperses the violence of colonisation across the globe as a transcendental principle of organisation. The colonising machine determines the entire spatial coordinates of worlds which are not merely *experienced* as different by human beings, but are *materially* different in their structures of visibility, their architectures of control, their institutional inequalities, and their economies of violence. In what follows, I would like to position Marechera as a dark precursor to a post-planetary turn in contemporary world literature that aims to “become with the world” rather than represent it: a geoliterature that thinks through the politics of abjection and postcoloniality as a line of flight; escaping the desire for recognition and taking up Deleuze and Guattari’s call for “a new Earth and a people that do not yet exist”.¹⁴¹

¹⁴¹ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, (London: Verso 1994; Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit 1991), p.169; p.108.

4. A Cut in the World

4.1. "Pure life" and the time of the postcolonial

In Charles Dickens' *Our Mutual Friend*, Riderhood, a former waterman who makes his living by stealing from corpses floating in the Thames, almost drowns before he is revived by the onlookers who carry his limp body up to Miss Abbey's pub. On the verge of death, something like an empathy of feeling emerges between Riderhood and the observers:

See! A token of life! An indubitable token of life! The spark may smoulder and go out, or it may glow and expand, but see! The four rough fellows seeing, shed tears. Neither Riderhood in this world, nor Riderhood in the other, could draw tears from them; but a striking human soul between the two can do it easily. He is struggling to come back. Now he is almost here, now he is far away again. Now he is struggling harder to get back. And yet — like us all, when we swoon — like us all, every day of our life, when we wake - he is instinctively unwilling to be restored to the consciousness of this existence, and would be left dormant, if he could.¹

Their sympathy is not for Riderhood's own life—his personality and relationships and actions—but rather for life itself. Between death and life, an impersonal, pre-subjective life emerges if only for a second. Deleuze returns to this passage in his final published work, writing just before his own death, as the literary expression of the life of immanence. A vital materiality which Dickens' characters can sense or apprehend before Riderhood returns to his own, individuated being, it is this impersonal and a-subjective life which literature captures or subtracts from the habits of our everyday perception:

¹ Charles Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend*, (London: Chapman and Hall 1865; repr. London: Penguin 1997), p.440.

Between [Riderhood's] life and his death, there is a moment that is only that of a life playing with death. The life of the individual gives way to an impersonal and yet singular life that releases a pure event freed from the accidents of internal and external life, that is, from the subjectivity and objectivity of what happens: a 'Homo tantum' with whom everyone empathises and who attains a sort of beatitude. It is [...] a life of pure immanence, neutral, beyond good and evil, for it was only the subject that incarnated it in the midsts of things that made it good or bad. The life of such individuality fades away in favour of the singular life immanent to a man who no longer has a name, though he can be mistaken for no other.²

Subsisting between the subjectivity and objectivity of what happens, between the perspectival fixity of the human eye and the brute facticity of things, a life of pure immanence emerges. This life is not immanent "to" anything, but is in fact immanence itself—unfolding and refolding as a univocal plane or *becoming*.

What would an ethics of pure life consist of? It would not consist in a recognition of an other-which-stands-before-me, and it would not consist in a representation of the world according to the perceptions of a pre-existing subject who acts according to moral predicates. The life which emerges between Riderhood's body dissolved of its subjectivity and the affections of the bodies of the observers is beyond good and evil; a becoming whose movement is essentially *transgressive*, always overflowing and disrupting those forms which try to contain it. This emphasis on the ethical in-humanity of becoming, which Deleuze elsewhere calls "a world without others", has led some to conclude that Deleuze's philosophy is blind to the ethics which a properly postcolonial politics needs—reconciliation, historicism, recognition.³ In short, all those ideas which speak to relations between actual humans living in particular historical situations. Julie Wuthnow has summarised this blindness by contrasting the nomadic or rhizomatic ethics of

² Gilles Deleuze, "Immanence: A Life" in *Pure Immanence: Essays on A Life*, trans. Anne Boyman, (New York: Zone Books 2001; Paris: Editions de Minuit 1995), pp.28-29.

³ See Gilles Deleuze, "Michel Tournier and the World Without Others", in *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester and Charles Stivale (London: Continuum 2004; Paris: Les Editions de Minuit 1969), pp.341-358.

Deleuze's vitalism with the politics of location and historicism with which indigenous and postcolonial thinkers have sought to resist the spatial and temporal effects of colonisation:

By failing to historicise the concept of mobility and its links to concrete practices of colonization, models of subjectivity that embrace nomad thought as a defining feature necessarily bring very problematic political baggage along for the ride. As mobile and disembodied, the nomadic subject is not locatable; as unlocatable, the nomadic subject cannot be held accountable for its social location, whether it be one of privilege or marginalization.⁴

Yet we might go further still: by being strictly non-linear and a-historical, does the vitalist time of becoming or "Aion" not instruct the colonised to embrace those forms of fragmented experience, temporal disruption, and rootless relations to land which colonial violence forced upon them?⁵

In the previous chapter, I argued that the concept of intensive multiplicity Deleuze finds in Bergson (where something can only be divided by changing *in kind*) forms the basis of the spatial politics one finds in Deleuze's work with Guattari—where the minor is that which cannot be subordinated to a standard or norm. This in turn leads to a way of thinking the politics of world literature against the dialectical current of its inception, in favour of a process of continual differentiation or the aberrant movements one finds in the work of Dambudzo Marechera.⁶ Marechera's work seeks to escape from the spatial politics of both national and world literatures. For the Hegelian dialectic at work in Kojève, Hyppolite and the postcolonial theorists they influenced it was the role of the peripheral author to represent their peripheral situation back to the centre, thus overcoming the dialectic of otherness in which they are trapped. This results, however, not in a more ethical relation to the other, but a concept of difference in which what

⁴ Julie Wuthnow, "Deleuze in the Postcolonial: On Nomads and Indigenous Politics", *Feminist Theory*, 3:2 (2002), pp.183-200 (p.187).

⁵ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, p.186.

⁶ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, (London: Continuum 2004; Paris: Les Editions Des Minuit 1980), p.218.

returns from the encounter with the other can *only* be a new kind of subject. Dialectical philosophies of difference only reveal or disclose that which was in fact there all along, waiting to be uncovered. In contrast, Marechera's fictions engage in practices of experimentation with the real I have named geoliterature and which break down the system of core and peripheral literatures towards the radical unknown or a people yet to come. This is a better way of understanding Deleuze's call for "a world without others" he diagnoses in Michel Tournier's repetition of the Crusoe-myth; as a world without *standards*.⁷ For the same reason, the logic of racism appears in *A Thousand Plateaus* as, counter-intuitively, a logic of *inclusion* rather than exclusion:

Racism operates by the determination of degrees of deviance in relation to the White-Man face, which endeavours to integrate nonconforming traits into increasingly eccentric and backward waves, sometimes tolerating them at given places under given conditions, in a given ghetto, sometimes erasing them from the wall, which never abides alterity (it's a Jew, it's an Arab, it's a Negro, it's a lunatic . . .). From the viewpoint of racism, there is no exterior, there are no people on the outside. There are only people who should be like us and whose crime it is not to be. The dividing line is not between inside and outside but rather is internal to simultaneous signifying chains and successive subjective choices. Racism never detects the particles of the other; it propagates waves of sameness until those who resist identification have been wiped out (or those who only allow themselves to be identified at a given degree of divergence).⁸

The cartography of literary forms I have called geoliterature, which proceeds via experimentation and speculation with the real (rather than representation or recognition) forces a path to the outside—to that which escapes the logic of identity. Following the logic of the line of flight (the aberrant movements which conjoin and redistribute signifying chains in Marechera, or which produce the irrational geography of Kafka's *The Trial*), geoliterature displaces the world so as an

⁷ See Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, pp.341-358.

⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp.197-198.

Earth can emerge. An Earth is what emerges once the habits of perception which organise experience into a world have been deterritorialised. The politics of the Earth are not just a question of how to occupy a territory, but how to compose with the real so as a reterritorialisation can happen: new relations to land, to animals, to the molecular and the non-human. The people to come are not subjects, they are perhaps not even human.

The question then becomes, how does newness enter the world? If not through dialectical mediation, how does literature compose or cut out a people to come from the present world? The logic of the line of flight therefore needs a temporal or historical dimension as well as a spatial one. If the politics of otherness works, according to Deleuze and Guattari, via progressive inclusion to a standard or molar identity, the same can be said of time itself. Colonisation imposed on non-Western societies not only a standard form of territory (the state-form) but also a standard form of time. As Pheng Cheah has argued:

The subordination of all regions of the globe to Greenwich Mean Time as the point zero for the synchronization of clocks is a synecdoche for European colonial domination of the rest of the world because it enables a mapping that places Europe at the world's centre. This tethering to the uniform march of European standard time is a form of imprisonment that smothers lived local temporalities.⁹

The speculative cartography which emerges when one reads world-literary texts as a series of lines of flight, fractures the image of the world-as-globe. Colonisation was the end of a world, at least for the victims, and paying attention to the lived reality of this fact belies the need to think history not as a progressive line of time but according to the multiple *durations* which global or state-time of capitalism smooths over. This is not to make a political goal of hybridity or cultural difference in itself, as has sometimes been the case with discourse analysis of the kind we find in, for example, the work of Homi K. Bhabha.¹⁰ On the contrary, Capitalism has no

⁹ Pheng Cheah, *What is a World? On Postcolonial Literature as World Literature*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press 2016), p.1.

¹⁰ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, (London: Routledge 2004 [1994]).

problem with hybridity or diversity. For that reason, “World Literature” as discipline, if it is truly to go beyond the commitment to diversity and recognition of the other in comparative analysis, must draw upon the speculative resources of philosophy if it is to really *think* the spatial and temporal reality of the other Earths that global capital subordinates to state-time. This is not an idealist position, as lines of flight can occur in the most everyday utterances. For example, when Toni Morrison argues that “modern life begins with slavery” this is not (or not only) an argument about history.¹¹ It is to assert the existence of a lived duration and reality that takes flight from universal history. What happens to modernism (in its historical existence as an archive or texts, as well as its repetition as a living tradition by authors today) if we say, following Morrison:

From a woman's point of view, in terms of confronting the problems of where the world is now, black women had to deal with "post-modern" problems in the nineteenth century and earlier. These things had to be addressed by black people a long time ago. Certain kinds of dissolution, the loss of and the need to reconstruct certain kinds of stability. Certain kinds of madness, deliberately going mad in order, as one of the characters says in the book, "in order not to lose your mind". These strategies for survival made the truly modern person.¹²

By being a truly modernist theory of time and history in which the subject is dissolved or fragmented, Deleuze’s philosophy is *already* postcolonial—it already thinks with those colonised and enslaved persons that were the first moderns. This is the sense in which Deleuze speaks of his work as “science fiction” and “apocalyptic” and its intervention in thought as “untimely”: “that is to say, acting counter to our time and therefore on our time and, let us hope, for the benefit of a time to come”.¹³ In the same paragraph, Deleuze cites Samuel Butler’s *Erewhon* (1872) as instructive for the same reason:

¹¹ Toni Morrison, qtd. in Paul Gilroy, “Living Memory: a Meeting with Toni Morrison” in *Small Acts: Thoughts on the Politics of Black Cultures*, (London: Serpent’s Tale 1993), p.177.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton, (London: Continuum 2004; Paris: Presse Universitaires de France 1967), p.xix.

signifying at once the originary 'nowhere' and the displaced, modified and always recreated 'here-and-now'. Neither empirical particularities nor abstract universals: a Cogito for a dissolved self. [...] What this book should have therefore made apparent is the advent of a coherence that is no more our own, that of mankind, than that of God or the world.¹⁴

Thinking both the nowhere and the here and now of literature's aberrant movements and untimely interventions in history, I wish to read works of world literature *against the category of world*. That is to say, as a line of flight which always escapes or evades the particularities of time and space, without substituting a totality or universal time of "man" or "language" or "capitalism" or "culture" that would striate and constrain their way of resisting the present and opening up radically discontinuous futures.¹⁵

In the following chapter, I will argue that Deleuze's philosophy of time, detailed in the three passive syntheses of chapter two of *Difference and Repetition*, builds upon a Bergsonian understanding of duration which enables us to think a non-standard politics of time, in the same manner that the concept of intensive multiplicity discloses the spatial politics of minor literature in the study of Kafka. By rewriting the discussion of time in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, Deleuze abandons Kant's insistence on a universal subject for whom time is given as linear and historical, in favour of a "dissolved" or "larval subject" for whom the future is not a series of given possibilities, but a *cut* or caesura in time itself.¹⁶ Reading three

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ For the same reason I agree with the Warwick Research Collective that recent claims towards a so-called 'level playing field' or a more equitable cultural globalisation in comparative literature are a non-starter. See Warwick Research Collective, *Combined and Uneven Development: Towards a New Theory of World Literature*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press 2015), pp.22-23. On art's "resistance to the present" See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchill, (London: Verso 1994; Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit 1991), p.110.

¹⁶ Here the relevance of Deleuze's three syntheses of time for postcolonial studies has been noted by Lorna Burns, who reads Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* against the predominant modes of 'writing back' and instead argues for: "an understanding of postcolonialism as an historical relation that gives rise to a newness 'that is not part of the continuum of past and present', but which is, nevertheless, derived from a particular (colonial) history. It is this paradoxical relation in which the engagement with history both generates a future with the potential to become something wholly new and revises our understanding of all that led up to it (a new continuum that leads from past to present and into the future) that Deleuze establishes in his third synthesis of time: articulating a theory of becoming that accounts for the production of the new from a re-dress of the past and, I argue, when

contemporary works of world literature, J.M. Coetzee's *Age of Iron* (1990), Amitav Ghosh's *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1995) and Alexis Wright's *The Swan Book* (2015), I will argue that Deleuze's philosophy, precisely by thinking those lived temporalities and durations outside of standard European time, not only anticipates those temporal critiques of colonisation by non-Western literatures, but in fact makes them both necessary and inevitable. In doing so, the geoliterature which emerged in chapter two now reaches its full potential as a textual and temporal politics of "a new Earth"—a speculative cartography through which we might compose with a people yet to come.¹⁷

4.2. First synthesis of time: J.M Coetzee's *Age of Iron*

In *Caribbean Discourse*, Edouard Glissant distinguishes between two ways of measuring time. On the one hand, he argues, there is the time of *filiation* by which European thought has traditionally tended to think the history of the world:

For the Western mind, it is a matter of learning the natural Genesis, the primordial slime, the Eternal Garden, and embarking [...] on a journey to an ordering-knowledge. History and Literature agree (With the rare episodes of a blending of the two that quickly came to an end, as with the pre-Socratic philosophers) to separate man from the world, to subject nature to culture. The linear nature of narrative and the linear form of chronology take shape in this context. Man, the chosen one, knows himself and knows the world, not because he is part of it, but because he establishes a sequence and measures it according to his own time scale, which is determined by his affiliation.¹⁸

applied to writing back, reveals the revisionary force of postcolonial writing." See Lorna Burns, "Becoming-Bertha: Virtual Difference and Repetition in Postcolonial 'Writing Back', a Deleuzian Reading of Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*", *Deleuze Studies*, 4 (1), pp.17-18.

¹⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p.108.

¹⁸ Edouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse*, trans. J. Michael Dash, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia 1989; Paris, Les Editions du Seuil 1981), p.73.

Glissant observes that Western or European mythologies and narratives often tend towards a search for origins, for unity of the self with some external nature. But in so doing, Western thought at least since Aristotle has subjected nature to a way of measuring time that takes “man” as its starting point, and subordinates the time of nature or the world to this sequence: “History is written with a capital H. It is a totality that excludes other histories that do not fit into that of the West”.¹⁹ Different histories, times, and places are only different in so far as they are different *from* some transcendental perspective (whether that be “man”, “the subject”, “universal spirit”, “nation”, or “capitalism”) which supersedes their differences and orders them according to degrees of distance from the standard. This is the majoritarian image of thought which runs throughout Deleuze’s philosophy as a critical counterpoint to the affirmative philosophy of difference articulated firstly in *Bergsonism* and then fully formed in *Difference and Repetition*. In the previous chapter we restated the problem of postcolonial difference not as one of hybridity (the being-in-between two identities that characterises the novel of national allegory) but of an intensive process of self-differentiation that Dambudzo Marechera’s fictions carry out in a minor mode. The question then is, if it’s possible to conceive of minoritarian spaces via the Bergsonian concept of intensive multiplicity, is it also possible to conceive of minoritarian *times* particular to the postcolonial as a worldly literature; that is, a literature that responds to the ethical imperative to fashion new worlds from the existing one?

Just as intensive space becomes subject to extensive space in the majoritarian image of thought (where multiplicity is measured by an external standard or rule), in such a way does time come to be *spatialised* in the same manner that philosophies of identity come to spatialise difference as difference “between” thing-a and thing-b.²⁰ Against this linear and segmentary History is ranged the time of creolisation, which Glissant conceives as a ceaseless process of differentiation without ground and which has both a spatial and temporal

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 75.

²⁰ As in the previous chapter, ‘hybridity’ is in this sense a poor concept for thinking the primacy of cultural difference as it tends to suggest two or more identities which are then differentiated *from* one another.

dimension: “History is fissured by histories; they relentlessly toss aside those who have not had the time to see themselves through a tangle of lianas”.²¹ In the same manner that the vines of the liana find a path, a line of flight, through and between the branches of the trees whose arborescence it both subverts and sporadically incorporates, so does creolisation place History into variation; scanning the past for new combinations and new lines of alliance which cut through the narrative time of linear determination and chronological sequence.

If in the previous chapter I thought the space of world literature not via those arborescent and evolutionary models which subordinate difference to identity, and found in Marechera a rhizomatic movement, a writing machine, that makes the system of core and periphery take off on a line of flight, I now aim to add to this thought a temporal and historical dimension. What if the time of world literature were thought not only as a line of time, branching off here and there, but also and at the same time a *rhizome* making irrational cuts and forced movements between local historical and temporal circumstances? Such a time would not point towards a future which is merely the continuation of the present (a universal time of development towards which those on the outside of globalisation must restlessly yearn) but a futurity which is aberrant, unknown, and which makes a cut in history itself—setting off on an entirely different line of time. This is why Deleuze’s philosophy of time is inherently revolutionary, and speaks to postcolonial writing immediately and complicitly, not as part of a division of labour or dialectical play between European philosophy and its others. As Deleuze argues, following Rimbaud, “I is an other”.²² The first movement in this complicity between Deleuze’s philosophy of time in *Difference and Repetition* and postcolonial critiques of the “time of man” concerns the first synthesis of time—the living present.²³ The way Deleuze revolutionises Kant’s formula of the passive synthesis of the present has

²¹ Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse*, p.231.

²² Gilles Deleuze, *Kant’s Critical Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, (London: The Athlone Press 1984; Paris: Presses Universitaires de France 1963), p.viii.

²³ It’s useful to think of the three syntheses of time as corresponding to the three modes of stratification on the body-without-organs in *Anti-Oedipus*. In this way we might describe them thus: the connective synthesis of the present, the conjunctive synthesis of the past or memory, and the disjunctive syntheses of the future or eternal return.

immediate ramifications when placed alongside a novel such as J.M. Coetzee's *Age of Iron*. Here the notion of the "dissolved" or "larval" subject speaks to an ethical commitment that isn't grounded in a universal "time of man" nor its dialectical opposite in a unifying otherness. The lived experience of colonialism (in which I include the neo-colonial period in South Africa post-independence) is not an appeal to some fixed identity or subject position, but speaks instead to the way in which colonisation engages processes of subjectification and desubjectification as a combined and uneven temporality. Apartheid law works combined and unevenly in Coetzee's fictions by requiring the subaltern be subject at certain points and in certain institutional times and spaces, and at other times reduced to an inhuman other. These dissolved and fragmentary processes of (de-)subjectification, as the only way to describe postcolonial experience, are my primary justification for reading Deleuze's philosophy of time as, in retrospect, already a postcolonial one.

Reading Coetzee's work in terms of a postcolonial ethic, however, one is immediately confronted with Coetzee's own status as settler, and this problem is doubled when one considers Coetzee's postcolonial ethics through the philosophy of Deleuze which has its own accusations of Eurocentrism. On the one hand, as David Atwell has registered, one cannot escape the fact that in Coetzee's work "the African subject or African humanity is under-represented and under-valued, and to this extent Coetzee's work exhibits the *mentalité* of the settler colonial" and, on the other, that "Coetzee deconstructs the discourses of power from within".²⁴ These discourses of power manifest themselves in Coetzee's work via the question of representation and its ethical pitfalls, which makes a comparative reading alongside Deleuze's philosophical critique of representation all the more pertinent, at the same time as it opens itself up to ridicule on the grounds that one cannot reject representation on behalf of those who themselves are unrepresented. Yet the tension between these two positions, their unresolved dialectic, precisely ensures its *timeliness*; whenever one appears to have solved the question of representation, to have answered the ethical call of the other, this can only be a failure to think the

²⁴ David Atwell, "J.M. Coetzee and the Idea of Africa", in *Studies in Settler Colonialism: Politics, Identity and Culture*, ed. Fiona Bateman and Lionel Pilkington, London: Palgrave 2011. pp.219-220.

other *as* other, absolutely, as that which cannot by definition be represented.

Atwell understands this tension in Coetzee's work as a will to represent the South African situation in narrative, but in such a way that the singular perspective of the narrator, being partial, must always be disavowed: "In this view Coetzee is also said to acknowledge the African presence, but he withdraws from directly representing it for what is an ethically defensible reason, which is that he avoids the epistemological capture that would only confirm the position of privilege".²⁵ The question which drives Deleuze's and Coetzee's ethical visions, then, is how to think and write in such a way that the other can be thought independently of an ethical *subject* to whom difference and alterity must be represented, captured, sublimated. This is the basis of Grant Hamilton's recent study of Deleuze and Coetzee (though only the novels *Dusklands*, *Waiting for the Barbarians* and *Foe*):

Thus, possession determines the final act of representation as one of internalization—to bring the exterior into the interior. However, it is clear that such a movement can only occur by means of a certain relativity that ensures that the self-same is maintained as the subject of all investigation.²⁶

Likewise, Samantha Vice links this desire for an impersonal or impartial ethics that would not attempt to capture difference and subject it to identity, to the politics of style in *Age of Iron*: "It is plausible to think that the spare style and distinctive form of J.M. Coetzee's writing has some close connection to the content and quality of his moral vision".²⁷ However, I would argue that Coetzee's austere style (at least in *Age of Iron*) is better linked to a politics of *time* which is at the same time a critique of the ontological foundations by which a Western, European conception of ethics begins.²⁸

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Grant Hamilton, *On Representation: Deleuze and Coetzee on the Colonised Subject*, (Amsterdam: Rodopi 2011), p.152.

²⁷ Samantha Vice, "Truth and Love Together at Last: Style, Form, and Moral Vision in *Age of Iron*", in *Coetzee and Ethics: Philosophical Perspectives on Literature*, ed. Anton Leist and Peter Singer, (New York: Columbia University Press 2010), p.293.

²⁸ In this way I would want to understand Coetzee's own stated allegiance to the European tradition in the manner in which Adorno speaks of having "tradition in oneself, to hate it properly", See Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections From Damaged Life*, trans. E. F. N. Jephcott, (London: Verso 2005 [Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag 1951]), p.52.

The phenomenological tradition in Western philosophy has tended to follow Kantian thinking in presupposing a subject of experience that must organise the sensual data we receive into meaningful units or components of self. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* this takes the form of a passive synthesis which, argues Deleuze, “is not carried out by the mind but occurs in the mind”.²⁹ Passive synthesis might also be called a sensory-motor schema for the way it organises perception without us having to consciously, that is, actively, do so.³⁰ Everyday habits such as walking or eating are (at least for most people) passive syntheses in that they are contractions of biological processes into repetitive movements or actions, without us having to consciously think about them. “I” is a habit, as well as an other.

Significantly, when Kant came to rewrite the critique, the passive syntheses of “sense, imagination and apperception” were refolded under the faculty of understanding and were no longer passive or pre-subjective in the specific way Deleuze needs them to be.³¹ Deleuze follows Husserl in recovering from Kant’s *A Critique* the concept of passive synthesis, and thus an account of selfhood which is both empirical and transcendental (i.e. concerned with lived experience but without installing a ready-made subject of that experience). For Deleuze, the subject does not emerge fully formed, as present in time, but rather the present consists in a contraction by way of passive synthesis of a dissolved, latent, or larval subject. Sensibility (which will later become the body-without-organs) here is a plane of matter-energy, or immanence. But before that plane of discontinuous matter, sensibility or immanence can be represented as a subject-object relation, “contemplative souls must be installed here and there; passive selves, sub-representative syntheses and habituses capable of contracting the cases or the elements into one another [...]”.³² Contraction describes a physio-biological process which selects from the flux of experience elements of synthesis. The present is no longer a point on a line which stretches backwards and forwards in time, but a

²⁹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.91.

³⁰ For example, when we have a sensation of taste this is not a conscious activity carried out by the mind, but is nonetheless a sensory response which occurs in the mind.

³¹ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* trans. Norman Kemp Smith, (London: Palgrave Macmillan 2007 [1781]), p.127 (A.94/B.127).

³² Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.357.

multiplicity of durations both human and non-human: a plant is a contraction of light, minerals, carbon-dioxide and other elements with their own durations. Durations, to use Bergson's term, are non-compossible differences or intensities Deleuze here refers to as a "a living present".³³

Deleuze's desire to avoid the ego-centrism and anthropocentrism of much post-Kantian philosophy echoes Glissant's call for an alternative to totalising theories of history which posit a universal time of man. It is this alternative time of the postcolonial in which durations outside the history of the Kantian subject take precedence, which emerges when reading Deleuze's first passive synthesis (the synthesis of the living present) through J.M. Coetzee's *Age of Iron*, and which informs my theorisation of world literature according to aberrant movements and lines of flight rather than totalising systems and structures. The novel is a first-person account of the final days of Mrs Curren following her diagnosis of bone cancer, taking the form of a letter to her emigrant daughter. On the day she is diagnosed, she takes in a homeless drifter and alcoholic named Vercueil, whom she tasks with posting the letter after her death. Mrs Curren's imminent death, as well as those of her maid Florence's son Bheki and his friend at the hands of the police, are the trigger for something of an (albeit qualified) ethical awakening on the part of Mrs Curren. But this ethical awakening or conversion does not take clearly or easily the form of a national allegory in which the white Mrs Curren recognises and acknowledges the shared humanity of the black persons who constitute the background to her everyday lifeworld. In fact, in response to the politically engaged and militant sensibility of Bheki's friend, she feels only unrecognition or disjunction:

I did not like him. I do not like him. I look into my heart and nowhere do I find a trace of feeling for him. As there are people to whom one spontaneously warms, so there are people to whom, from the first, we are cold. That is all. He is not like Bheki. He has no charm. There is something stupid about him, something deliberately stupid, obstructive, intractable.³⁴

³³ Ibid. p.99

³⁴ J.M. Coetzee, *Age of Iron*, (London: Seeker and Warburg 1990; repr. London: Penguin 2010), p.78.

This is one of numerous occasions where the novel foregrounds the irreconcilable differences between Mrs Curren and the black characters in her vicinity, as well as between Florence, her son and his friend, and the vagabond Vercueil. Both Mrs Curren and Florence associate him or directly refer to him as waste, emptiness or rubbish: “I heard him at the far end of the landing, trying the two locked doors. Only rubbish, I wanted to whisper to him – rubbish and dead memories; but the fog in my head closed in again”; “He lives here,” said Florence, ‘but he is rubbish. He is good for nothing’; “Florence gave me a malicious look. ‘Rubbish person,’ she said, and stamped off”.³⁵ Subjectivity or selfhood exists on a spectrum or continuum in the novel, between the white, bourgeois Mrs Curren and the black characters who enter in and out of her house, with Vercueil a fleeting sometimes imperceptible figure who exists at the boundary between the house and the outside world. It is Mrs Curren’s journey towards death, the evacuation of her subjectivity as a *dissolving* away of the self that triggers her ethical becoming and enables the perception of durations other than her own, but this is *not* the ethical perception of an Other by a subject one finds in, for example, Levinas.³⁶ In the complex interplay of repetition and difference which underplays the novel’s first-person narration, it is possible to detect the obsolescence of the Kantian subject rather than its representation. This obsolescence does not take the form of allegory, but a linguistic variation which opens up the possibility of a becoming without identity, that is to say, a dissolved subjectivity that might form the basis of an alternative ethics.

Mrs Curren’s daily life, her continuing existence in time, is made up of repetition. In this sense the novel’s prose style is presented as *a* matter of habit as much as Mrs Curren’s own habits. Her repetitive actions and passions, make up the linguistic matter of Coetzee’s style rather than simply a thematic or allegorical content. Habitual description makes up a large part of the novel:

³⁵ Ibid. p.14, p.47, p.59.

³⁶ See Immanuel Levinas, *Humanism of the Other*, trans. Nidra Poller, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press 2005; Montpellier: Éditions Fata Morgana 1972).

I dozed (it is still yesterday I am writing about), read, dozed again. I made tea, put on a record. Bar by bar the Goldberg Variations erected themselves in the air. I crossed to the window. It was nearly dark. Against the garage wall the man was squatting, smoking, the point of his cigarette glowing. Perhaps he saw me, perhaps not. Together we listened.³⁷

It is in these moments of everyday or pedestrian description that form and content become almost indistinguishable, the words presented as flatly as possible the character's own as if the novel were only written passively or unconsciously. Subjectivity here is nothing more than the contractions of a passive synthesis: "our rhythms, our reserves, our reaction times, the thousand intertwinings, the presents and fatigues of which we are composed, are defined on the basis of our contemplations".³⁸ The steady and metered phrasing of the sentences recalls the bar by bar rhythm of the *Goldberg Variations*, such that the everyday habits of Mrs Curren's life erect themselves in our mind as a kind of verbal architecture. Habits are the building blocks of consciousness in that they are the contractions of the mechanical and biological perceptions the body undergoes in passivity. As narrative, habitual representation in grammatically uniform sentences passively synthesises for the reader the sense of the novel's space-time as extensity. The present of the novel is what passes in prosaic contemplation as "the foundation from which all other psychic phenomena derive".³⁹

Yet this is where Deleuze's first synthesis of time, the contraction of durations which allows the imagination to "hold" passing instants in contemplation constituting a line of time, allows us to think subjectivity from the point of view of a transcendental empiricism (that is, from the perspective of pre-personal and pre-subjective experience) rather than idealism. The unravelling of Mrs Curren's subjectivity, the culmination of her duration (but not the durations of the physical and biological matter she consists of) opens the possibility for her of other durations both human and animal:

³⁷ Ibid. p.30.

³⁸ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.98.

³⁹ Ibid. p.99.

I try to sleep. I empty my mind; calm, begins to steal over me. I am falling, I think, I am falling: welcome, sweet sleep. Then at the very edge of oblivion something looms up and pulls me back, something whose name can only be dread. I shake myself free. I am awake in my room in my bed, all is well. A fly settles on my cheek. It cleans itself. It begins to explore. It walks across my eye, my open eye. I want to blink, I want to wave it away, but I cannot. Through an eye that is and is not mine I stare at it. It licks itself, if that is the word. There is nothing in those bulging organs that I can recognise as a face. But it is upon me, it is here: it struts across me, a creature from another world.⁴⁰

The grounding of her present in a passive synthesis, “the foundation of time”, is subject to a radical ungrounding, as the unity of the ego is opened up to the possibility of multiple durations—including the duration of the cancerous cells which mean oblivion.⁴¹ The living present is therefore “one” and “many”, where contraction implies “a present which may be exhausted and which passes, a present of a certain duration which varies according to the species, the individuals, the organisms and the parts of organisms under consideration”.⁴² Beyond the emotional fatigue of her illness, there is the visceral fatigue of a body which can no longer bear what it contemplates:

The duration of an organism’s present, or its various presents, will vary according to the natural contractile range of its contemplative souls. In other words, fatigue is a real component of contemplation [...] Fatigue marks the point at which the soul can no longer contract what it contemplates, the moment at which contraction and contemplation come apart.⁴³

The novel’s first-person narration which contracts the repetitive habits of Mrs Curren’s present(s) enters into fatigue when it contemplates that which it cannot

⁴⁰ Coetzee, *Age of Iron*, p.26-27.

⁴¹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.101.

⁴² Ibid. p.98.

⁴³ Ibid.

hope to contract: the obsolescence of the bourgeois colonial lifeworld which underpins her subjectivity. The deaths of Bheki and his friend are less events which occur in the novel's present, than as temporal wounds which press in upon Mrs Curren's "presentness" from all sides:

But the respite is never long. Clouds come over, thoughts begin to bunch, to take on the dense, angry life of a swarm of flies. I shake my head, trying; to clear them away. This is my hand, I say, opening my eyes wide, staring at the veins on the back of my hand; this is the bedspread. Then as quick as lightning something strikes. In an instant I am gone and in another instant I am back, still staring at my hand. Between these instants an hour may have passed or the blink of an eye, during which I have been absent, gone, struggling with something thick and rubbery that invades the mouth and grips the tongue at its root, something that comes from the depths of the sea. I surface, shaking my head like a swimmer. In my throat is a taste of bile, of sulphur. Madness! I say to myself: this is what it tastes like to be mad!⁴⁴

Here again the unity of the ego is confronted with the multiplicity of other durations; of flies and other animals which metabolise organic waste. The deaths of Bheki and his friend at the hands of the police are scars which disrupt and undermine Mrs Curren's attempts at reconciliation or recognition of the duration of the other. Her death is implied in theirs, as the end of a duration which can no longer contract that which it contemplates into a meaningful line of time based on the succession of instants. The wound or scar is, for Deleuze, not in this sense the sign of a past injury, but "the present fact of having been wounded".⁴⁵ The present fact of having been wounded is what describes the temporal asymmetry between the durations of the (post-)colonised and the presentness of the Kantian subject of modernity as described by Glissant.

⁴⁴ Coetzee, *Age of Iron*, p.182.

⁴⁵ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.98.

But in its multiplicity, its ungrounding of time on the identity of a subject, Deleuze's "phenomenology [...] of the present" avoids the ego- and anthropocentrism of phenomenology itself.⁴⁶ Here a second elaboration of Deleuze's claim "we are all made of lines" with which I began my introduction becomes apparent: we are all made of *time-lines*.⁴⁷ Thinking about the present via the concept of multiplicity avoids the two paradoxes of common sense notions of presentness. Firstly, that if there is such a thing as the present, it must pass and therefore cease to be present or, on the hand, if it doesn't pass, there is only one eternal present and no such thing as time at all. Deleuze responds to these paradoxes by insisting on the multiplicity of durations in the present, and the transcendental or pure past as that into which the present passes as a virtual whole or structure of possibility for our experience of presentness. It is to the concept of the pure past as a way of thinking an "other time" of world literature I shall now turn.⁴⁸ If an ethics suitable to a world literature is not to be founded on the recognition or representation of a single duration, but on a multiplicity of durations which open up the possibility of other worlds, Deleuze's philosophy of time is already "post" colonial in its commitment to removing the ground from under the feet of the Kantian subject. Coetzee's novel perhaps gives us no answers as to how one should respond to the wounds which apartheid continues to unfold in the present, but in what follows I shall attempt to think through the consequences of this dilemma when it comes to reading Deleuze's second synthesis of time (that of the pure past) through Amitav Ghosh's *The Calcutta Chromosome*.

4.3. Second synthesis of time: Amitav Ghosh's *The Calcutta Chromosome*

⁴⁶ Jay Lampert, *Deleuze and Guattari's Philosophy of History*, (London: Continuum 2006), p.51.

⁴⁷ Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, "Politics" in *On the Line*, (California: Semiotext(e) 1983).

⁴⁸ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.103.

Amitav Ghosh's 1995 novel *The Calcutta Chromosome* gives us an image of what a globally computerised society might have looked like from the perspective of the beginnings of the widespread use of the internet:

If the system hadn't stalled Antar would never have guessed that the scrap of paper on his screen was the remnant of an ID card. [...] The card turned up in one of those routine inventories that went flashing around the globe with metronomic regularity, for no reason that Antar could understand, except that it was what the system did best. Once it got started it would keep them coming, hour after hour, an endless succession of documents and objects, stopping only when it stumbled on something it couldn't file: the most trivial things usually.⁴⁹

The description of AVA, the global information-database program the novel's protagonist Antar works at from his terminal in a dilapidated Manhattan apartment, bears some resemblance to Gayatri Spivak's more recent description of globalisation in *Death of a Discipline* as a computer-enabled abstraction rather than a differentiated political space:

Globalization is the imposition of the same system of exchange everywhere. In the gridwork of electronic capital, we achieve that abstract ball covered in latitudes and longitudes, cut by virtual lines, once the equator and the tropics and so on, now drawn by the requirements of Geographical Information Systems.⁵⁰

In contrast to the globe, Spivak proposes the notion of the planetary as a theoretical repose to the totalizing tendency of World-Systems analysis. For Spivak, what world-systems analysis reveals is, in fact, "US nationalism masquerading as globalism" and that, whether close or distant, the praxis of reading literature should attend to the incommensurability of different worlds and what is *untranslatable* or negated in encounters between cultures.⁵¹ Globalisation is not so much a space for

⁴⁹ Amitav Ghosh, *The Calcutta Chromosome*, (London: Picador 1995; repr. London: John Murray 2011), p.3.

⁵⁰ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Death of a Discipline*, (New York: Columbia University Press 2003), p.72.

⁵¹ Ibid. p.108.

Spivak, but a kind of affect produced by financial capitalism. Planetaryity – as a differentiated political space which contains *multiple* worlds, replaces the globe as something which “exists on our computers [but] no one lives there”.⁵² Nevertheless, the *effects* of globalisation are real and that the lived friction between the local rubbing up against the global (or the planetary against the global) is what theories of World Literature attempt to study (the world-system is in that sense a real abstraction). Spivak’s use of the word virtual (in the sense of “virtual reality” or a simulacrum) should in actual fact be closer to Deleuze’s notion of virtuality as that which is real without being actual: the globe as an abstraction effected by the spread of finance capital and communications technology but is nonetheless actualised when it comes to defining our sense of a lifeworld. The medium is the message, to repurpose the adage of Marshall McLuhan.⁵³ Here Spivak’s comparison between the global and the planetary is curiously a-temporal— if there are multiple worlds which globalisation attempts to smooth over, do they exist in the same time as global capital (defined by universal exchange and maximum efficiency)? Or by a slowness specific to local conditions? Or by a different temporality all together? What is the relation of this other time of the planetary to history? Ghosh’s novel is an early example of what Sharae Deckard has called a “cartographic” imaginary which articulates the lived friction between the universal and the local, the singular and the specific, beyond the times and spaces of both national literatures and global fictions.⁵⁴ This is where the notion of cartography as a practice of mapping that proceeds from experience rather than beginning with a universal or totality, intersects with Deleuze’s interest in the politics of literature. In Dambudzo Marechera this takes the form of disjunctive metaphorical series rendered as the minor zones of postcolonial experimentation

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ It is undeniable, for instance, that the communications technology which enabled globalisation also allowed for the rapid transmission of ideas and tactics between physically distant subaltern struggles fighting for the planetary over the global.

⁵⁴ Deckard points out that these cartographic fictions can nevertheless be set within the national space, and in that sense aren’t opposed to national literatures but are curiously similar to Deleuze and Guattari’s description of minor literature as cartography. Sharae Deckard, *Mapping the World-Ecology: Conjectures on World-Ecological Literature* <https://www.academia.edu/2083255/Mapping_the_World-Ecology_Conjectures_on_World-Ecological_Literature> [accessed 1 February 2018].

beyond national allegory. Is it possible to translate the notion of writing-as-cartography to a *temporal* politics then? What would a postcolonial cartography of the past look like? Here I turn to Deleuze's second synthesis of time (the pure past) as a way to conceive of an intervention into the colonial archive in the form of a cartography or mapping. Building on my analysis of Coetzee's *Age of Iron* as the writing of a dissolved or larval postcolonial subject of modernity, Ghosh's *The Calcutta Chromosome* conceives of the colonial archive as an active synthesis or subjectivising machine which overcodes other times and histories via capture. The novel's layered temporality which, to paraphrase to Deleuze, we might call its "sheets of the past", as well as the protagonists' various attempts to "journey" through these sheets in the manner of a line of flight which cuts through different strata, should therefore be read as an attempt to evade capture by the subject of modernity and its constitutive others.⁵⁵

In this I draw upon several critical approaches to Ghosh's work which highlight its intimate relationship with disciplines outside literature (history, anthropology, medicine) but to which literature is uniquely capable of traversing and reconfiguring according to its own logic. The concern that postcolonial theory is overly discursive, philosophical as opposed to practical and historical is, in Ghosh's fiction, subverted such that the disciplinary means by which colonialism enacted forms of epistemic violence against its outsides are to be thought of doubly, theoretically and practically, from whence the power of Ghosh's writing emerges in both its particularity and its relevance to postcolonial acts of solidarity and resistance which are, already, global and international. Robert Dixon, for instance, argues that "Ghosh's writing reflects the recent concern of anthropologists with the porosity of cultural boundaries", and that his fiction operates precisely in the transversal spaces between disciplinary, national, epistemic, historical and cultural regimes: "the characters in Ghosh's novels do not occupy discrete cultures, but "dwell in travel", in cultural spaces that flow across borders—the "shadow lines"

⁵⁵ Deleuze describes Alain Resnais' *Last Year in Marienbad* as composed from "sheets of past". See Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema II: The Time Image* trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galetta, (London: Continuum 2005; Paris: Les Editions de Minuit 1985), p.101.

drawn around modern nation states”.⁵⁶ Like Deleuze’s philosophy, which similarly dwells in travel, in concepts which are always *on the line* of constellations, Ghosh seeks the traces of a subaltern history which might be recovered or actualised from within the closed system of global history itself. Like Assia Djebar, this takes the form of an intervention in the archive and against the archive, which is immanent to a politics of style. John Thieme comes close to this Deleuzian configuration of the archive as doubly virtual and actual when he argues that *The Calcutta Chromosome*:

interweaves a network of traces—from the history of late nineteenth-century malaria research, theological movements generally deemed to be heretical in the West and slightly futuristic technology *inter alia*—to provide the possibility of an alternative subaltern history, which exists in parallel with colonial history as an equally (or possibly more) potent epistemological system, albeit one which has traditionally operated through silence rather than articulation.⁵⁷

My contention is that Ghosh’s investment in a subaltern or postcolonial praxis of historicism requires an altogether alternative conception of history, memory and the archive than those European or Western epistemologies. This alternative conceptualisation works itself out via a literary style which disrupts what Anshuman A. Mondal has described a “the metaphysics of modernity” and which finds its parallel in Ghosh’s work in the form of universalist claims regarding time, narrative and history constitutive of the bourgeois or realist novel.⁵⁸ *The Calcutta Chromosome* works on the metaphysics of modernity via a literary stylistics in the same manner Deleuze’s philosophy works on the ontology of modernity via a philosophical stylistics. The subordination of a metaphysics of presence, identity and universalism by a conceptual style which dwells in travel and constructs lines of

⁵⁶ Robert Nixon, “The Writing of Amitav Ghosh” in *Amitav Ghosh: A Critical Companion*, ed. Tabish Khair, (Delhi: Permanent Black 2010), [pp.9-35], p.10

⁵⁷ John Thieme, “The Discoverer Discovered: Amitav Ghosh’s *The Calcutta Chromosome*”, in in *Amitav Ghosh: A Critical Companion*, ed. Tabish Khair, (Delhi: Permanent Black 2010), [pp.128-141], p.131.

⁵⁸ Anshuman A. Mondal, *Amitav Ghosh*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press 2007), p.41.

flight as a way out of the archive of history ties Ghosh and Deleuze together in the form of a specifically postcolonial intellectual endeavour.

Ghosh's novel stages an intervention into the colonial archive (in this case the 1902 discovery by British colonial officer Ronald Ross of the means by which malaria is transmitted via mosquitos) which forms one of the lived abstractions via which the global striates and stratifies local conditions. As Bonnie Roos and Alex Hunt point out, when the real Ross came to publicise his discovery in his diaries, its implication in colonial power structures was written out:

These writings reinforce a heroic paradigm that disenfranchised those Indian subjects who, in making his research possible, played a role in this discovery. Ross ignored the ideological work—so often assumed absent in scientific discovery—operating within his experiments. Malaria's disproportionate effect on Westerners travelling to tropical and subtropical regions necessarily linked scientific progress to a colonial agenda—facts outside the scope of his diaries.⁵⁹

In Ross' diaries, the living present of his subjects is simply the background noise or mosquito hum out of which the colonial archive arises as a universal "time of man". Ghosh's novel doesn't recognise this other time of the subaltern by giving it a voice, but reconstructs these two impossible times in abstract: out of the colonial archive which obliterates all other presents, arises a pure past of a dissolved subjectivity suitable for postcolonial reality. This reading is necessarily transformative of both Deleuze's philosophy of time (which now takes on a postcolonial perspective) as well as Ghosh's novel (which becomes a literary-philosophical machine for the dissolving of Kantian modes of subjectivity and personhood). The novel is undoubtedly global in reach and institutional affiliation, receiving positive reviews and acknowledgement from American and European literary magazines, but this is not to say it is representative of Spivak's "bad" globalisation.

⁵⁹ Bonnie Roos and Alex Hunt, "Systems and Secrecy: Postcolonial Ecocriticism and Ghosh's *The Calcutta Chromosome*", in *The Cambridge Introduction to Literature and the Environment*, ed. Louise Westling, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2014), p.184.

Rather, the novel works by way of what I have termed a geoliterature, which utilises its institutional existence as a global novel with audiences in South Asia, Europe and America as an opportunity for sabotage, redistributing those flows of knowledge and intellectual capital which reinforce the scientific claims made by the colonial archive.

The novel's narrative is constructed via a series of interlocking "presents" via which it transports the reader from the near future of Antar's Manhattan apartment, back to Calcutta in the mid 1990s, and the events surrounding Ross' discovery of the Malaria parasite in the same city at the turn of the century. Whilst sitting at his workstation Antar comes across an identity card belonging to his former colleague, Dr. Murugan, displayed on AVA's digital projection screen. What follows is a detective story (similar in style to Proust's involuntary memory) in which Antar discovers that Murugan was on the trail of a secret Indian society (unnamed but referred to at times as "the secret") guiding Ross' research and attempting to transfer their consciousnesses between bodies, via a hitherto unknown genetic mutation Murugan calls "the Calcutta chromosome".⁶⁰ The novel's plot is at times complex and confusing, in the manner of a delirium, where the reader only belatedly learns that certain characters are reincarnated versions of those occurring at different levels of the novel's time line.

In "The Philosophy of Crime Novels" Deleuze distinguishes between the detective fiction of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, characterised by inductive reason in the Anglo-Saxon mould (Sherlock Holmes) and deductive reasoning in its Gallic form (Tabaret and Lecoq) and what he calls "the new literary use and exploitation of cops and criminals".⁶¹ In the old conception, according to Deleuze, "we would be shown a genius detective devoting the whole power of his mind to the search and discovery of the truth".⁶² But in the new detective novel,

⁶⁰ Ghosh, *The Calcutta Chromosome*, p.247.

⁶¹ Deleuze, "The Philosophy of Crime Novels" in *Desert Islands and Other Texts: 1953-1974* trans. Christopher Bush, Charles Stivale et. al. (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e) 2004; Paris: Éditions de Minuit 2002), p.81.

⁶² Ibid.

“police activity has nothing to do with a metaphysical or scientific search for the truth”:

Police work no more resembles scientific inquiry than a telephone call from an informant, inter-police relations, or mechanisms of torture resemble metaphysics. As a general rule, there are two distinct cases: 1) the professional murder, where the police know immediately more or less who is responsible; and 2) the sexual murder, where the guilty party could be anyone. But in either case the problem is not framed in terms of truth. It is rather an astonishing compensation of error. The suspect, known to the cops but never charged, is either nabbed in some other domain than his usual sphere of criminal activity (whence the American schema of the untouchable gangster, who is arrested and deported for tax fraud); or he is provoked, forced to show himself, as they lie in wait for him.⁶³

Instead of a metaphysical search for truth in which the genius detective faces his mirror and opposite in the criminal mastermind, the new detective novel engenders a deep complicity between cops and criminals in which the crime is only incidental and replaced by a vision of society defined by “the power of falsehood”.⁶⁴ Clearly inspired by Foucault’s analysis of the production of delinquency, Deleuze’s description of the new detective novel which, by the power of falsehood, shows that “a society indeed reflects itself to itself in its police and its criminals, even while it protects itself from them by means of a fundamental deep complicity between them” returns us to the real in the form of a parody: delinquency and criminality are the fictions by which the social body is produced.⁶⁵ Ghosh’s novel is a detective novel which takes the colonial archive as its power of falsehood. Murugan’s search for the truth of Ronald Ross’ discovery is only incidental to the way in which we learn that the past (our historical reality) is the effect of a fabricating power (the colonial archive) to subsume other temporalities and histories within its present. AVA, Antar’s digital manager-cum-AI-companion, is the

⁶³ Ibid. p.82.

⁶⁴ Ibid. p.83.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

colonial archive given sentience, as she endlessly categorises and organises the objects and documents which enter her “timeline” via the acquisitions of the International Water Council—Antar’s corporate employer.⁶⁶ In Deleuze’s terms, AVA’s labour is an active synthesis performed by a digital brain, which produces a past, present and future as a line of time out of which nothing escapes or is left uncategorised. But in the course of the novel’s Matryoska-doll narrative, an entirely other conception of the past begins to emerge: that of the “pure past” given to passive synthesis by a “dissolved” or “larval” subject which, as will become clear, is at the same time a properly postcolonial one.

If the first synthesis of the present mirrors the “connective” synthesis from *Anti Oedipus*, which enjoins elements on the body-without-organs together and, in its temporal form, allows for expectancy in the organism (the projection from past to future through the present), the second synthesis is *conjunctive*; it allows for a present duration that passes and falls away into memory.⁶⁷ In *Difference and Repetition*, that which the present passes into (as an archive of present moments) is not actual in the sense of the living present, but nevertheless can come back in the form of memory. The madeleine here is Murugan’s burnt identity card, which opens up into a Proustian episode in which we witness Antar’s first meeting with Murugan more than a decade previously. Unlike the active synthesis of AVA’s digital timeline, Antar’s memory is an open whole in which any moment might be recalled: the past is “present” to itself at every point, open to reminiscence as a conjunctive synthesis. There is no need to scroll back through one’s memory to find a past moment. This is the first instance in which the sense of memory as an archive differs from the active synthesis of the colonial archive, which orders and striates the past as a *closed* system. Yet Deleuze also claims that there is a pure past that is transcendental and *a priori* rather than psychological: “To the degree to which the past in general is the element in which each former present preserves itself and may be focused upon, the former present finds itself ‘represented’ in the present

⁶⁶ Ghosh, *The Calcutta Chromosome*, p.8.

⁶⁷ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane, (London: Continuum 2004; Paris: Les Editions de Minuit 1972), p.14.

one.”⁶⁸ Here Deleuze draws on Bergson to evoke the sense of the past (not just memory) as an a-temporal bloc which serves as the condition into which any present moment finds itself as, at the same time, a *passing* moment. Each present moment in time must also *be* its history; its becoming-history as the condition of its presentness:

Each past is contemporaneous with the present it was, the whole past coexists with the present in relation to which it is past, but the pure element of the past in general pre-exists the passing present. There is thus a substantial temporal element (the Past which was never present) playing the role of ground.⁶⁹

In structuralist terms the pure past is the virtual whole which is actualised in specific ways, as the structure of language is an open system which is actualised in specific speech acts. Unlike the active synthesis of the colonial archive, which represents the past by reducing difference to the same (*species: mosquito; genus: anopheles...*) the synthesis of the pure past contracts the different series or “sheets of [the] past” which are enfolded in the life of any present “thing”.⁷⁰ Like Dickens’ Riderhood, a life can consist of any number of impossible differences (son, friend, waterman, thief, scoundrel) that nonetheless are enfolded as *a life*. For Deleuze, the pure or *a priori* past gives coherence to the heterogenous series of presents without which there would be no possibility of a lifeworld. This is the sense in which Deleuze speaks of being as really the actualised becoming of a virtual past or whole contracted in the present; that is, as *destiny*:

Destiny never consists in step-by-step deterministic relations between presents which succeed one another according to the order of a represented time. Rather, it implies between successive presents non-localisable connections, actions at a distance, systems of replay, resonance

⁶⁸ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.102.

⁶⁹ Ibid. p.104.

⁷⁰ Deleuze, *Cinema II: The Time Image*, p.109.

and echoes, objective chances, signs, signals and roles which transcend spatial locations and temporal successions.⁷¹

Rather than the representable succession of presents in a single narrative, Ghosh's novel finds coherence in the resonances between layers of the past which signal a time *other* than the historical determination of the archive. The signs of the pure past occur in the novel as aberrant objects; traces which escape AVA's archive and whose erratic movement create resonances for the reader between the narrative's historical layers—Murugan's identity card, a sheet of newspaper from 1892 preserved as fish wrapping in the mid-1990s, Antar's archaic answering machine which preserves Murugan's disembodied voice, the mysterious servant Lachman/Lutchman/Laakhan who serves as the temporal Doctor Moriarty to Murugan's Holmes. These resonances prompt characters to abandon their everyday and habitual movements across Calcutta and Manhattan, as they are seized by a line of flight which selects elements of the pure past, making them resonate together, *changing* their relation to the novel's (or simply Antar's) present:

Suddenly Urmilla found herself shaking with indignation. She knew she was on the verge of one of those periodic seizures of outrage which sometimes gripped her when she was working on her investigative articles. She was so angry now that she stopped caring about the time—about the press conference at the great Eastern, the news editor, even the minister of communications from Delhi. She stuffed the pieces of fish back into the plastic bag and marched to the door. On her way out she snatched up the sheets of Xerox paper, crumpling them into a ball, in her fist.⁷²

The relation between characters' living presents and the passive synthesis of memory, or of the pure past, is one of contraction and dilation (such as the wide and pointed ends of a cone) as these aberrant signs force resonances to move between series. Deleuze names these aberrant signs "lacking a place" the "object=x" or "dark precursor" which belong to no individual series or chronological

⁷¹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.105.

⁷² Ghosh, *The Calcutta Chromosome*, p.178.

time (they are other than any historical moment) but whose movement brings together the connective synthesis of the present and the conjunctive synthesis of the past in the form of a *disjunctive* synthesis:

Given two heterogenous series, two series of differences, the precursor plays the part of the differentiator of these differences. In this manner, by virtue of its own power, it puts them into immediate relation to one another [...] Because the path it traces is invisible and becomes visible only in reverse, to the extent that it is travelled over and covered over by the phenomena it induces within the system, it has no place other than that from which it is 'missing', no identity other than that which it lacks [...] We call this dark precursor, this difference in itself or difference in the second degree which relates heterogeneous systems and even completely disparate things, the *disparate*.⁷³

This disparate power returns us to the figure of the aberrant movement, the irrational cut which gives our path through Deleuze's thought its coherence if only in the form of a constitutive difference-in-itself or a vector of transformation we call the line of flight. The line of flight, I have argued, is what opens world literature to its pedagogical and ethical function: the possibility of a new world from within the world. In *The Calcutta Chromosome*, Murugan's schizophrenic movement across the novel's spatial and temporal series can only be read retrospectively as belonging to the operation of a dark precursor: the non-archivable element which makes the novel's "presents" resonate together and gives the appearance of an historical timeline only retroactively. The novel's investigation into the ways in which colonial science relies upon and is conditioned by the colonial archive belies the ethical awareness that *it could always have been different*. The dark precursor or object= x *par excellence* being the "Silence", the occult society which the novel posits as the irrational ground upon which the colonial archive is situated and which it can never successfully subdue or capture.⁷⁴ The science-fiction elements of the plot wherein characters repeat themselves across Ghosh's narrative in the manner

⁷³ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.146-147.

⁷⁴ Ghosh, *The Calcutta Chromosome*, p.212.

in which the malaria virus copies and pastes its DNA using the mosquito as a vector, are not simply allegorical or metaphorical but in themselves express the potential for postcolonial difference, an aberrant movement, to resonate in the midst of the colonial archive. A delirium or archival fever signals the existence of other presents, other histories. In the manner of a “cone of memory” which is wide or narrow depending on the perspective of each passing moment to all the others, the novel recovers the pasts whose difference colonisation cancels out by way of an occupation of the living present(s) by chronological time.

But the most enigmatic sign of the pure past in the novel, the creature which creates resonances and forced movements between the passive syntheses of memory is undoubtedly the mosquito itself. Its erratic movement across bodies affects a delirium in the colonial officers and scientists who find themselves in Calcutta. Delirium becomes for the novel an ontological as well as medical phenomenon, as the viral movement of malaria—repeats itself by “cut-and-past[ing]” its DNA across bodies—in one of the novel’s many translations between medical and digital parlance. The viral movement of Malaria which forces aberrant movements to occur across time and space undoes the identity of characters’ presents.⁷⁵ The colonial archive is grounded upon, is conditioned by, a delirium in which the identity of the same gives way to a difference it cannot contract and a past it cannot represent:

He flattened himself against the mattress and tried to lie still. Spread-eagling his arms and legs he waited—waited to discover whether they really were inside the net; whether his inflamed skin would allow him to discern the feel of their bites. It was strangely intimate to lie there like that, against damp cloth, spread out in that elementally open posture of invitation, of embrace, of longing. [...] Displaying himself in those minute detailed ways that only they were small enough to see, to understand, because only they had eyes that were designed to see not the whole but the parts, each in its uniqueness. Involuntarily he flexed his shoulders, arching his back, offering

⁷⁵ Ibid. p.248.

himself up, waiting to discover where they would touch him first, where he would first detect the tingling prick of their bites".⁷⁶

Like the detective complicit in the crime he seeks to understand, Murugan's passage through the novel's enfolded histories is enabled by what Derrida called "archive fever" and which the novel posits as the other time of a past which is not exhausted by history.⁷⁷ Murugan's search for the Calcutta Chromosome, in the hope that it will offer a more permanent cure for the neurosyphilis he has temporally halted by way of the malaria virus, turns him into a desiring-machine composed of parts—a dissolved subject seeking reverberations in the past which the colonial archive of world literary theory (in its globalising mode) can only witness as a delirium.⁷⁸

This brings us to the question of how the other past of Deleuze's second synthesis of time, where the relation between present and past is one of contraction and dilation rather than succession and determination, allows for a properly postcolonial philosophy of time? That is, how does Deleuze's philosophy inculcate a postcolonial critique of futurity based upon the passive rather than active synthesis of a dissolved subjectivity? In *Anti-Oedipus*, desire is presented as a force which scans the past from the perspective of the present in search of future actualisations, and Ghosh's novel likewise scans the history of the archive and colonial medicine in search of a delirium that cannot be exhausted by those determinations and which might open up new relations between our postcolonial present and the histories of violence which nonetheless striate it. In *Difference and Repetition* the pure past is in that sense "the future of the archive" in that it serves as the virtual condition for a future which is not simply the continuation of the present along a line of time:

⁷⁶ Ibid. p.154-155.

⁷⁷ Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1998; Paris: Éditions Galilée 1995).

⁷⁸ The now-archaic practice of using medically-induced malaria to temporally prevent syphilis infecting the brain is one of the many 'aberrant movements' between illness and cure the novel finds enigmatic of the relation between the colonial archive and the 'feverish histories' it attempts to silence, a passage we have also detected in the relations of complicity between law and criminality Deleuze finds in the 'new' detective novels.

In other words, the sign of the present is already a passage to the limit, a maximal contraction which comes to sanction the choice of a particular level as such, which is in itself contracted or relaxed among an infinity of possible levels.⁷⁹

The power which scans the past and selects from an infinity of possible layers irrational cuts, aberrant movements between series, is the force of futurity thought now as a *disjunctive synthesis*; the third synthesis of time.

4.4. Third synthesis of time: Alexis Wright's *The Swan Book*

Whether in Deleuze's claim that "Lawrence, Miller, Kerouac, Burroughs, Artaud and Beckett know more about schizophrenia than do psychologists and psychoanalysts" or the self-description of *The Logic of Sense* as a psychoanalytical *novel* or the desire in *Difference and Repetition* to turn philosophy into a form of apocalyptic science fiction, Deleuze's thought is always formed in proximity to literature and literary authors.⁸⁰ But this is never done in the form of a philosophy of literature, a representation of what literature *does*, so much as a literary-philosophy that operates through an encounter with literature's powers of affection and perception, such that philosophy must generate new concepts for what literature does to thought.⁸¹ It is in the sense of a future which escapes its full determination by the past, an unknown or aberrant cut in time, that Deleuze and Guattari always speak of art in terms of the invention of a people.⁸² Deleuze's deduction of third synthesis of time as a future which is radically open, aberrant, *different* must be thought in terms intimately involved in literature's powers of affection and perception. In fact, Deleuze indexes the third synthesis of time (the

⁷⁹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.105.

⁸⁰ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, "On Anti-Oedipus", in Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations*, trans. Martin Joughin, (New York: Columbia University Press 1995; Paris: Les Editions de Minuit 1990), p.23.

⁸¹ The same can be said for Deleuze's 'cine-philosophy' in his encounter with filmic art.

⁸² Or, for that matter, Derrida speaks of literature affirming the sense of a justice which is always *l'avenir* without being present. See Jacques Derrida, "That Strange Institution Called Literature", in *Acts of Literature*, ed. Derek Attridge, (New York: Routledge 1992), p.38.

future) to Hamlet: “what does this mean: the empty form of time or third synthesis? The Northern Prince says: ‘time is out of joint’”.⁸³ But if Deleuze can be accused of a fatal Eurocentrism it is surely here, because the question of a future which is not simply the continuation of the past through the present, but is itself an interregnum where historical injustice (in Hamlet’s case, the murder of his father by his uncle) returns transformed; as a differential power or futurity that changes our relation to actual history, is properly speaking a *postcolonial* problematic. This is how I will justify thinking Deleuze’s deduction of the third synthesis of time via the postcolonial politics of Alexis Wright’s *The Swan Book* (2013), as a textual encounter that Deleuze’s philosophy precurses *darkly*.

Approaches to Wright’s fiction have tended to situated her work in the Australian context of Aboriginal sovereignty and the politics of concern and care which structures the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal attempts at solidarity. For Jennifer Mills, *The Swan Book* “is not the Great Australian Novel, it is the great novel of the Federal Intervention”.⁸⁴ In this respect her work is often indexed to a spatial politics which resists the forms of sovereignty belonging to settler colonial nation states. As Nicholas Birns relates:

The Swan Book does not make an absolute, legitimist claim to land on the part of indigenous people, as if trying to mimic a European nation-state. Instead, it depicts indigenous people tending and shepherding a commonwealth in which non-indigenous people who share their values can also gather.⁸⁵

Like Ghosh, Wright’s approach to narratology offers the possibility for thinking solidarity and relationality outside the logics of integration and capture which structure dialectical philosophies of difference. My concern here, however, is with the *temporal* politics of Wright’s novel which has to do with articulating a sense of futurity which has in common with Deleuze’s philosophy of time an emphasis on

⁸³ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.111.

⁸⁴ Jennifer Mills, “The Rarest of Birds”, *Overland* (2013), <https://overland.org.au/2013/09/the-rarest-of-birds/> [accessed 15th October 2018]

⁸⁵ Nicholas Birns, *Contemporary Australian Literature: A World Not Yet Dead*, (Sydney: Sydney University Press 2015), p.151.

discontinuity, the break, or the caesura in time itself. In this way my reading acknowledges those critical receptions of *The Swan Book* which stress the particularity of its intervention into postcolonial Australian history, but without essentialising the novel as *only* indexed to those specific political dynamics.

Set in an unspecified point in Australia's near future, Wright's novel follows the life of Oblivia, an Aboriginal girl who is found mute hiding in the roots of a eucalyptus tree following a sexual assault. Taken in by a white European emigré named Bella Donna, living in the hull of an abandoned navy boat marooned on the shores of a lake-turned-swamp by dust storms, Oblivia learns about the world beyond their government-mandated compound for displaced Aboriginals, including the time "before the drought" which transforms Australia's coastline into a desert.⁸⁶ The government enclosure which surrounds the lake's inhabitants alludes to the continuing Australian policy of intervention into Aboriginal communities, and the inherent exclusion of indigenous voices from that policy. But in all other ways the novel's narrative and linguistic transgression from representation disclose a world in which time is, like Hamlet's, out of joint. Oblivia, as the novel's perspectival protagonist, we're told has "a cut snake virus" living in her brain which "is as stuffed as some old broken-down Commodore you see left dumped in the bush".⁸⁷ This dissolved or displaced narrative perspective makes possible the incursion of other styles, languages and historical realities into the text. French, Latin and Waanyi words occasionally interject into the fractured storytelling as several linguistic series running adjacent to one another, and disclose a multiplicity of presents which envelop the novel's characters and landscape. Here chronological time resonates with a force from outside, a mythological time that is not antecedent to human history but stands alongside it as "*Dreaming*".⁸⁸ Dreaming exists somewhere between a noun and a verb and attaches itself to people, places or things. The time of "dreaming" runs parallel to history but is not subject to its linear determination. As a non-chronological temporality, it connects indigenous Australians with their spiritual ancestors, as well as with animals and landscape. But more precisely

⁸⁶ Alexis Wright, *The Swan Book*, (Sydney: Giramondo 2013; repr. London: Constable 2016), p.7.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid. p.14. Original emphasis in this and all following citations.

dreaming evokes the sense of *country* apart from landscape. Landscape painting in the European tradition usually implies the separation of subject from object (the figure who perceives the landscape *as a landscape* and not herself). By dissolving or fragmenting Oblivia's subjectivity in favour of a lattice-work style in which omniscient narration and first-person perspective are at various points interrupted by a collective dreaming voice presented in italics, the novel does away with the Kantian impression of landscape so that an Earth can emerge. This is not a spatial politics of hybridity, but a temporal politics that disrupts the spatial geographies via which world literary theory thinks the world as an object for the understanding in the Kantian sense. Now it's the *country* as a spatial category existing in time which is forced out of joint, where the entanglement of the human and non-human, language and animal chatter allows for something like an Earth to emerge from world:

The swamp's natural sounds of protest were often mixed with lamenting ceremonies. Haunting chants rose and fell on the water like a beating drum, and sounds of clap sticks oriented thoughts, while the droning didgeridoos blended all sounds into the surreal experience of a background listening, which had become normal listening. Listen! That's what music sounds like! The woman once explained to the girl that the music of epic stories normally sounded like this. *This is the world itself, disassembling its thoughts.*⁸⁹

Country is the "nowhere" and the displaced, disguised, modified and always recreated "here-and-now" in the manner Deleuze describes Samuel Butler's *Erewhon*.⁹⁰ Barbara Glowczewski relates how, in the context of Walpiri desert painting, the language of dreaming works via a temporal indeterminacy that subjects the conventions of landscape to an abstract cartography of lines and becomings out of which the Walpiri compose their sense of time and history:

Kuruwarri, a word with multiple meanings, literally image, designates any painting made by men or women, but also the mythical narratives and

⁸⁹ Ibid. p.54.

⁹⁰ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.xix.

everything that gives its name to a Dreaming. *Kuruwarri* are also the marks left by the heroes in the landscape: cave paintings whose origin was attributed to them; depressions in the ground they would have made when sitting; beds of sand dug out under their steps; springs that sprung from their urine, sperm or milk; ochre deposits brought to light from their coagulated blood. Most of the landscape features are thus imprints of the passage of the Dreaming heroes or the metamorphosis of their bodies. A swamp or a cave mark their disappearance into the earth. Rocks testify to their petrified organs. Trees reveal their underground forces.⁹¹

In contrast to the way in which the majority of apocalyptic narratives operate on the disconnection between the “before” and “after” the cataclysm, Oblivia’s world is in an uneasy continuity with the time before Australia’s catastrophic climate change, where Aboriginal communities “already knew what it was like to lose country”.⁹² Instead it is dreaming which splits time into a before and after in the manner of Deleuze’s third synthesis of the future: a disjunctive synthesis which acts as a caesura or cut in time and stops the novel from falling into the conservatism of dystopic nihilism. Dreaming drives the narrative towards a collective, or at least non-subjective, future which is open in respect to the archival past which it does not resemble:

[Oblivia] walks around the old dry swamp pretty regularly they say, and having seen her where there is a light moving over the marshes in the middle of the night, like a will-o’-the-wisp, they thought that they had heard her screaming, *kayi, kayi kala-wurru nganyi, your country is calling out for you*, which they described was just like listening to a sigh of a moth extending out over the landscape, or a whisper from the scrub ancestor catching a little stick falling from a dead tree, although nothing that can truly be heard—just a sensation of straining to hear something, which understandably, was how anyone should whisper on this spirit-broken place,

⁹¹ Barbara Glowczewski, *Desert Dreamers: With the Walpiri People of Australia*, trans. Paul Buck and Catherine Petit, (Minneapolis: Univocal 2016; Paris: Plon 1989), pp.93-94.

⁹² Wright, *The Swan Book*, p.40.

from seeing their old homes scattered to kingdom come, of being where the Army owned everything, every centimetre of their traditional land, every line of buried song, stories, feelings, the sound of their voices, and every word spoken loudly on this place now.⁹³

The novel's epilogue gathers together the linguistic series established in the previous pages, suggesting a collective enunciation that is both more than the sum of Aboriginal persons to have lost their country, and less than any given population of displaced persons. Known as "foolish fire" (*ignis fatuus*) in Latin and in European folklore as the ghost light seen over marshland made by the decaying plants, Oblivia is at the same time a will-o'-the-wisp, a ghost light, and an Aboriginal voice extending over the country attempting to recover what was lost. The call to country inscribes all of Aboriginal history, but as ghost light: what returns is not the actual events of colonisation, dispossession, dislocation in the form of redemption, but their *difference*. As a dark precursor, or ghost-lighted figure, Oblivia's narrative frames Australian history and the history of colonisation in Europe and elsewhere as a series of catastrophes which ramify in the present. But the evocation of dreaming, linguistically recreated as a collective voice which interrupts the narrative, opens up an other time in the form of a cut or caesura which "draws off" difference from those histories, opening them up not only to "a" future, but a multiplicity of futures that were disavowed in the actual events of colonisation as they occurred.⁹⁴ The cut, then, is "a pure order of time" in which the archival past is disconnected from a future that is open and undetermined with respect to chronology.⁹⁵

The third synthesis of time, as caesura, *cuts into* chronological time as psychological reality. The organic representation (me, myself and I) rendered by the

⁹³Ibid. p.334.

⁹⁴ There is a similar sense in which Derrida speaks of "hauntology" as a future-history: "Let us call it a hauntology. This logic of haunting would not be merely larger and more powerful than an ontology or a thinking of Being (of the "to be," assuming that it is a matter of Being in the "to be or not to be," but nothing is less certain). It would harbour within itself, but like circumscribed places or particular effects, eschatology and teleology themselves. It would comprehend them, but incomprehensibly." Jacques Derrida, *Spectres of Marx: the State of Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf, (London: Routledge 1994; Paris: Editions Galilée 1993), p.10.

⁹⁵ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.111.

first two syntheses as psychological succession—the remembrance of past moments and the pre-emption of future moments in a connective synthesis—is now dissolved or fragmented as an “aborted cogito”.⁹⁶ A collective enunciation overcomes the narrative in the form of a cut in chronological time:

This might be the same story about some important person carrying a swan centuries ago, and it might be the same story in centuries to come when someone will carry a swan back to this ground where its story once lived.⁹⁷

Through the cut which separates the archival past from the future as a “pure and empty form time”, the novel assembles history as in a series through which “pure differences” may pass.⁹⁸ The aborted cogito of Aboriginal consciousness, the “fracture in the I”, gives way to a dreaming in which Oblivia is the passive and dissolved subject of a dreaming which overtakes her own ego.⁹⁹ After the prelude, the novel’s first-person narration is overtaken and subsumed by a third-person voice which resonates across the novel’s historical series. As Linda Daley has argued:

At many points, the reader wonders who is speaking and what level of reality is this passage describing? The transparency of language frequently turns opaque and dense, asserting its material and performative dimensions over ideational content, and explicitly challenging the limits of chronology. This becomes possible once the first-person narration of the prelude ends. From that point on, an anonymous, third-person narrator takes over, and multiple dimensions of speech and thought become possible. Oblivia threads the story from beginning to end, but at times, it is not clear if she is functioning as a character or as a figure of relationship itself: to the land, or to the animal and spirit beings.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Ibid. p.135.

⁹⁷ Wright, *The Swan Book*, p.334.

⁹⁸ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.346; p.64.

⁹⁹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.111.

¹⁰⁰ Linda Daley, “Alexis Wright’s Fiction as World Making”, *Contemporary Women’s Writing*, 10:1 (2016), p.19.

Feasting on “a plague of *outsideness*”, Oblivia enables the novel’s collective narration to scan the past, organising and selecting those differences which are worthy of the caesura, are worthy of the future.¹⁰¹ As an aborted or dissolved subject, Oblivia follows the movements of the black swans mysteriously drawn to her. In their passage over Country she discovers the work of the dark precursor, the pure differences which reverberate across historical time, undoing them, and taking them up as a means of *futuring* her people, fabricating them into history:

Somehow, the books became good company. Pages were flicked over, and lines recited, and reflected upon: *The wild swan’s death-hymn took the soul of that waste place with joy*. Was this wasteland the swamp? She left the books on the table, and touched them frequently as though they were her friends. She sang over and over, a chant, her lonely incantation to the swans flying over Country, *All the black swans sail together*. She moves on, finds another thought—*He who becomes a swan, instructs the world!* This swan could spread his wings and fly where his spirit takes him, and Oblivia imagines the past disappearing in this flight to a frightening anticipated unknown future.¹⁰²

What returns in the third synthesis of time is not history, but difference. As eternal return, the third synthesis cuts off the past from the truly new. Actual events and identities are lost, but that force which makes them differ from one another in their specificity (*this wound, this massacre, this dispossession*) can return as difference in repetition. This is the sense in which Oblivia’s transformation into a fable, an aborted cogito for the creation of fictions, envelops all Aboriginal uprisings, all indigenous political heroes, all challenges to settler colonialism, but in the form of difference. The actual lives and events of those figures fall away into linear time and chronology, but the force of their difference, their *futuring* as a cut and a caesura in history, returns. The third synthesis of time in *Difference and Repetition* is in the

¹⁰¹ Wright, *The Swan Book*, p.15.

¹⁰² Ibid. p.240.

same sense Nietzsche's eternal return, understood as the return of difference-in-itself:

We produce something new only on condition that we repeat - once in the mode which constitutes the past, and once more in the present of metamorphosis. Moreover, what is produced, the absolutely new itself, is in turn nothing but repetition: the third repetition, this time by excess, the repetition of the future as eternal return [...] Eternal return affects only the new, what is produced under the condition of default and by the intermediary of metamorphosis.¹⁰³

Eternal return is that force by which the work makes a cut in the world and draws a caesura across history. The third synthesis of time already assumes a modernist aesthetics capable of fulfilling it, and is in that sense a *postcolonial* philosophy of time in the way Toni Morrison speaks of modernity as belonging to the slave, to the dispossessed and to the conquered. For Coetzee, Ghosh and Wright it serves as a corollary to and a realisation of the aborted cogito—that dissolved subject of modernity which populates the postcolony without ever belonging to a people. In its fabrication of a yet to come to which we may still not be worthy, it is nothing less than “a belief in the future”.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.113.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

Coda: For a Speculative Cartography

Debates in world-literary studies have seen a renewed emphasis on the category of world, world-building or worlding. In *Death of a Discipline* (2005) Gayatri Spivak argues for a *planetary* ethics against the too-quick embrace of globalisation.¹ More recently, Pheng Cheah has made the case for a worldly politics of postcolonial literature based on the tenets of a neo-cosmopolitanism.² Yet this renewed commitment to worldliness in literary studies comes at a time when the category of world has less and less purchase on the real forces of subjectification, semio-capitalism, technological warfare and ecological catastrophe at work in the world today. That is to say, it appears difficult for scholars of the humanities to accept that the world is no longer *for us*. This has been the overriding concern of my reading of world-literary texts alongside Deleuze's philosophy: to think the becoming of the world through its lines of flight, aberrant movements and immanent metamorphoses.

Despite this, many have used the uneasy proximity of Deleuze's vocabulary to the slogans of contemporary capitalism ("connect!" "network!" "share!" "be creative!") as an excuse to reject Deleuze's philosophy in total.³ Yet this would be to ignore the aspects of Deleuze's work which attain to the negative in the midst of affirmation: the "cruelty" of affects in his reading of Sacher-Masoch, the intolerability of the world in the presentation of his cine-philosophy, and his call to resist the present in his final collaboration with Guattari in *What is Philosophy?*⁴ It is the encounter with the work which has no prior schema, no formal

¹ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Death of a Discipline*, (New York: Columbia University Press 2005), pp.71-102.

² Pheng Cheah, *What is a World? On Postcolonial Literature as World Literature*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press 2016).

³ Slavoj Žižek, *Organs Without Bodies: On Deleuze and Consequences*, (London: Routledge 2004); Alexander R Galloway, *Forget Deleuze!* (2015) <<http://cultureandcommunication.org/galloway/forget-deleuze>> [Accessed 20 January 2018].

⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *Masochism: Coldness and Cruelty*, (New York: Zone Books 1989; Paris: Éditions de Minuit 1967); *Cinema II: The Time Image*, Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (London: Continuum 2005; Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit 1985), p.164; Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchill, (London: Verso 1994; Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit 1991), p.110.

prescription, and whose resistance to the present calls for the creation of a new people via the unworlding of the existent, where philosophy takes place:

The artist or the philosopher is quite incapable of creating a people, each can only summon it with all his strength. A people can only be created in abominable sufferings, and it cannot be concerned any more with art or philosophy. But books of philosophy and works of art also contain their sum of unimaginable sufferings that forewarn of the advent of a people. They have resistance in common—their resistance to death, to servitude, to the intolerable, to shame, and to the present.⁵

What Deleuze and Guattari call “minor” literature are those singular works whose encounters with an audience are aberrant, destructive and deterritorialising in respect to language and identity and which are thus immediately political as opposed to simply being about politics.⁶ By reading Deleuze’s philosophy and world-literary texts together via an ethics of the encounter, the image of thought which is produced is necessarily *involuntarist*: “something in the world forces us to think”.⁷ Thought, for Deleuze, follows a logic which can only be transgressive, which happens in the aberrant movements forced by an encounter with what is *not* philosophy, what is *not* common sense, what is *not* “what everybody knows” and which must of necessity go beyond opinion and cliché.⁸ As David Lapoujade has argued, the aberrant movement is not a full concept in Deleuze’s philosophy in the sense that “the minor”, “deterritorialisation”, and “becoming” are, but is nonetheless a para-concept; a refrain or flourish that is the hallmark of his having

⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p.110.

⁶ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1986; Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit 1975).

⁷ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (London: Continuum 2004; Paris: Presses Universitaires de France 1967), p.176.

⁸ Here Deleuze’s allusion to Talking Heads’ 1980 single “Cross-eyed and Painless” in *The Logic of Sensation* is less random when thought in conjunction with David Byrne’s call to ‘Stop Making Sense!’: “As the song says, ‘I feel like a knife, I feel like an accident’” Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith, (London: Continuum 2003; Paris: Éditions de la Différence 1981), p.158.

“done” philosophy.⁹ For instance, one can detect it in Deleuze’s “Letter to a Harsh Critic”, where he describes two methods or two logics of reading:

There are, you see, two ways of reading a book: you either see it as a box with something inside and start looking for what it signifies, and then if you’re even more perverse or depraved you set off after signifiers. And you treat the next book like a box contained in the box or containing it. And you annotate and interpret and question and write a book about the book, and so on and on. Or there’s the other way: you see the book as a little non-signifying machine, and the only question is ‘Does it work, and how does it work?’ How does it work for you? If it doesn’t work, if nothing comes through, you try another book. This second way of reading’s intensive: something comes through or it doesn’t. There is nothing to explain, nothing to understand, nothing to interpret. It’s like plugging in to an electric circuit.¹⁰

The first way of reading is extensive, it follows the dictum of representation in knowing already what a book can do. The second is intensive, experimental, and aberrant: it knows only the logic of the encounter, the line, and the passage of escape. As Deleuze and Guattari point out, “capitalism is profoundly illiterate”, preferring the instant data-transfer and semiotic cleanliness of financial coding over the messy and complex interactions of language.¹¹ The beginnings of financial globalisation they observed are now the condition for any defence of a *politics* of literary aesthetics undertaken today. The question is not “how is globalisation represented in literature?” but “what is it that globalisation does to representation such that interpretation of texts is politically enfeebled?” This is the question

⁹ David Lapoujade, *Aberrant Movements: The Philosophy of Gilles Deleuze*, trans. Joshua David Jordan, (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e) 2017; Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit 2014).

¹⁰ Gilles Deleuze, “Letter to a Harsh Critic”, in *Negotiations: 1972-1990*, trans. Martin Joughin, (New York: Columbia University Press 1995; Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit 1990), pp.7-8.

¹¹ “Writing has never been capitalism’s thing. Capitalism is profoundly illiterate. The death of writing is like the death of God or the death of the father: the thing was settled a long time ago, although the news of the event is slow to reach us, and there survives in us the memory of extinct signs with which we still write”. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, (London: Continuum 2004; Paris: Les Editions de Minuit 1972), p.260.

underlying my theorisation in Chapter 2 of geoliterature as a materialist semiotics that doesn't rely on a subject or world to be represented in the text.

Against the singular hermeneutics of world literature (in which what returns from the labour of interpretation is always the capitalist world-system one started with in the first place), Gayatri Spivak has insisted that, whether close or distant, the praxis of reading literature should attend to the incommensurability of different worlds and what is *untranslatable* or negated in encounters between cultures. Globalisation is not so much a space for Spivak, but a kind of affect produced by financial capitalism. The notion of planet – as a differentiated political space which contains *multiple* worlds, replaces the globe as something which “exists on our computers [but] no one lives there”.¹² As “real abstraction”, globalisation is felt in such worldly effects as climate change, even if as a social relation it cannot be represented in a single object, institution or person. The catastrophes caused by climate change (which is itself the manifestation of the capitalist mode of production) might in that sense be understood as the global crashing into the planetary—as that force which erases the very possibility for different cultural and political worlds by making larger swathes of the planet uninhabitable for human life.

If globalisation cannot be represented adequately in literature except in narratives which are simply about globalisation, how does World Literature as a discipline conceive of planetarity as a cultural formation that can register the friction between globalisation's universalising thrust and the singular differences of those cultural sites or zones resistant to it? This is the same problem of the One against the multiple which Deleuze's philosophy of difference attempts to move beyond and which, in Chapter 3, I reframed via the Bergsonian concept of multiplicity. In this way, the work of Dambudzo Marechera is instructive for how theories of world literature might think beyond the identities of national literatures, but also beyond the difference “in between” trans-national cultural formations. So rather than ask how does Zimbabwean literature differ from South African literature in respect to the dialectic of centre and periphery? We might ask: how

¹² Spivak, *Death of a Discipline* p.72.

does Zimbabwean literature differ from *itself*? Reading Marechera's writing machine as a difference engine, we can think the difference of Zimbabwean literature in terms of a pure multiplicity, as movement, rather than a difference which is secondary to the prior unity or totality of the "world" of world-systems analysis. The world does not pre-exist the fictions we make about it. This is not to say that the world is chaotic (there is a world system at work) but that it is at all times an open system that has to be created anew with each new inscription we make on a surface. The identity of centre and periphery arises from within multiplicity. Reading world literature with Deleuze then becomes a task of distinguishing between different types of multiplicities, of mapping movements and not points on a map, of following a line of flight:

[The concept of multiplicity] was created precisely in order to escape the abstract opposition between the multiple and the one, to escape dialectics, to succeed in conceiving the multiple in the pure state, to cease treating it as a numerical fragment of a lost Unity or Totality or as the organic element of a Unity or Totality yet to come, and instead distinguish between different types of multiplicity.¹³

Thinking in terms of multiplicity is essential if we are to truly think the worldliness of world literature and not the world as it is "for us"; if we are to replace points on a map with a cartography of lines.¹⁴

My argument for reading world literature via cartography of lines, for an ethics of the encounter which follows its own logic, is in contrast to the dominant ethical thrust in world-literary studies today. The emphasis on the cosmopolitan made by Pheng Cheah and others is part of a wider turn in world-literary studies towards an emphasis on human rights; where world literature acts as a

¹³ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, (London: Continuum 2004; Paris: Les Editions De Minuit 1980), p.36.

¹⁴ For the same reason the 'entropy' thesis of world literature espoused by, for example, David Damrosch (in which world literature is the 'leaking' of national literatures) is insufficient: it only confirms there *was* an identity called national literature in the first place. The antithesis to the world-literary argument is set up as the very condition of its possibility. See David Damrosch, *What is World Literature?* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press 2003).

subjectivising beacon upon those at the sharp end of capitalist modernity.¹⁵ When cultural difference is thought about dialectically in terms of the “the same” and “the Other”, what returns from the encounter with alterity can *only* be the identity of the same. ‘Cosmopolitanism’ as way of describing the worldliness of postcolonial literatures is for this reason a weak theorisation of cultural difference, because it slides too easily into its colloquial or governmental associations: the recognition of difference in terms of the identity of the same. This is why, for Deleuze, there can be no becoming-European, becoming-human or becoming-man because the minor, as intensive multiplicity, can never be subject to a standard or identity. Multiplicity, as the becoming of difference, is what precedes identity and not the opposite. Alain Badiou describes succinctly the weakness of cosmopolitanism when it comes to recognising difference in terms of the same:

The problem is that the ‘respect for differences’ and the ethics of human rights do seem to define an *identity*! And that, as a result, the respect for differences applies only to those differences which are reasonably consistent with this identity (which, after all, is the identity of a wealthy—albeit visibly declining—West). Even immigrants in this country [France], as seen by the partisans of ethics, are acceptably different only when they are ‘integrated’, only if they seek integration (which seems to mean, if you think about it, only if they want to *suppress* their difference). It might well be that ethical ideology [...] is simply the final imperative of a conquering civilisation: ‘Become like me and I will respect your difference’.¹⁶

Badiou’s solution to the problem (which insists on an ethics of truths indifferent to the actual multiplicity of differences in the world) is completely different to Deleuze’s Spinozist ethics, but their diagnosis of difference conceived only in terms of a difference *from* identity is the same: integration is an apparatus of capture.

¹⁵ See Elizabeth Anker, *Fictions of Dignity: Embodying Human Rights in World Literature*, (New York: Cornell University Press 2017).

¹⁶ Alain Badiou, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil* trans. Peter Hallward, (London: Verso 2012; Paris: Editions Hatier 1993), pp.24-25.

This is why, in my fourth chapter, I attempted to elude the apparatus of capture by which the becoming of world literature is integrated into a cosmopolitan identity of the same. There, Deleuze's modernist philosophy of time already *presumes* a dissolved or larval subject that is, I contend, a postcolonial ethics of alterity which cannot be reduced to the identity of the same. In place of the politics of the republic of letters which reduces difference to the same, and temporal unevenness to the chronological rule of Empire, the fictions of Coetzee, Ghosh, Wright and others allows us to think a speculative cartography and literary philosophy that is not simply "US nationalism masquerading as globalism" (as Spivak wryly observed) but which is multiple, differential, nomadic and thinks "with" rather than "for" those for whom the universal time of globalisation is to be rejected in favour of the innumerable lines of flight and durations which continually escape it, unravel it and deterritorialise it towards futures and peoples unknown and imperceptible.¹⁷ The third synthesis of time, the disjunctive or "both/neither", provides a logic for thinking the future in terms of radical alterity, a break or caesura in time, rather than a progressive integration of those durations outside of European modernity into its orbit. My reading of the novels of Coetzee, Ghosh, and Wright is *speculative* in this respect, because it aims to think the philosophical consequences of the aesthetic encounter in terms of Deleuze, rather than applying a philosophy of literature that would be given in advance.

Cultural difference and the multiplicity of perspectives alive in the world today, need to be thought together with an ethics of world literature that does not merely repeat the forms of European, bourgeois subjectivity at its peripheries but which can think the politics of alterity in terms of a singular vocation: a new Earth and a people yet to come. The people yet to come are not persons or individuals fundamentally like us but merely lacking human rights or parliamentary democracy; they must be called for via the practice of what Deleuze calls, after Henri Bergson, "fabulation".¹⁸

¹⁷ Spivak, *Death of a Discipline*, p.108.

¹⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema II: The Time Image* trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (London: Athlone 1989; Paris: Les Editions de Minuit 1985), p.150. Translation modified. Note Tomlinson and

In *Cinema 2* Deleuze defines fabulation in terms of a process of “fictioning the real” (*l’affabulation réalisante*), using the films of the Canadian documentary maker Pierre Perrault as an example.¹⁹ Perrault was a documentary maker, but a strange one in that he actively sought to create situations in which he became entangled with his subjects. In his 1963 film, *Pour la Suite du Monde*, Perrault works with a group of Québécois islanders to resume a long-abandoned collective fishing method of erecting weir barriers in the St Lawrence river in order to catch white dolphins, and the camera follows the islanders’ enthusiastic attempts to revive these forgotten or discarded aspects of their cultural history. Perrault’s cinema is not opposed to truth, or the real, but operates by way of a pure simulacrum or fictioning which Deleuze terms “the powers of the false”.²⁰ Fabulation’s falsifying power happens as something in-between Perrault’s camera and the islanders, who need one another as intercessors or operators for their becoming. Perrault is no less the author of the fiction than the islanders are its subject:

When Perrault is addressing his real characters of Quebec, it is not simply to eliminate fiction but to free it from the model of truth which penetrates it, and on the contrary to rediscover the pure and simple story-telling function which is opposed to this model. What is opposed to fiction is not the real; it is not the truth which is always that of the masters or colonisers; it is the story-telling function of the poor, in so far as it gives the false the power which makes it into a memory, a legend, a monster.²¹

The people which emerge out of Perrault’s film are not so much a subaltern-coming-to-language, but far more than a previously ignored minority gaining recognition—it’s a community that wasn’t there before and couldn’t be predicted by empirical research alone. Their fictioning makes the white dolphin into a legend, a monsterring that enables their becoming-animal as a mode of narration that is unfixed from subjective and objective predicates. It’s not a Utopia either, an ideal

Galeta translate ‘*l’affabulation*’ as ‘story-telling’, which, in my view, mistakenly removes its conceptual specificity in Bergson.

¹⁹ The English translators also term this process “story-telling becoming reality”. Deleuze, *Cinema II*, pp.324-245, n.37.

²⁰ Ibid. p.126.

²¹ Ibid. p.150.

or transcendent world separate from our own, but a process of becoming-other than the possibilities offered by the present state of affairs. For Deleuze, the task of the modern work is to abandon Utopia and instead “take up Bergson’s notion of fabulation and give it a political meaning”.²²

Perrault’s film, like the geoliterature of Yacine, Farès and Djébar, or the writing machines of Marechera, or the aberrant durations of Coetzee, Ghosh and Wright, functions in the manner of a probe which scans the past, searching for lines of flight and modes of becoming outside of the categories of “the colonised”, “the Other” or “those-who-are-not-us”. In the manner of a “cartography of the virtual” the fictions of fabulation contribute to the invention of a people to come in a real (which is to say, *false*) way other than utopianism. In this sense, as Ronald Bogue has argued, writing *is* its own becoming:

For Deleuze, then, to write is not to propose models of an ideal world but to hint at possibilities, to open a way forward through an experimentation on the real, an unsettling of the powers that be—their institutions, practices, categories and concepts—a process of becoming-other that engages in the generative forces of metamorphosis immanent within the world.²³

A geoliterature is always a plugging into the lines of flight which criss-cross the real, opening up paths of escape and resistances to the present state of things. Whether in Captain Ahab’s becoming-whale, or Gregor’s becoming-insect, world literatures express their ethical and political function when they take on the power of the false: as fables which become their own becoming; a fictioning. The mode of speculative cartography or fictioning the real which world literature sometimes undergoes, and which I have variously mapped in the course of my analysis, consists in texts for which the world is not a metaphor of integration and recognition, but an infernal collection of lines through which one might flee: a cartography of escape. This is not prediction, much less a Utopia, but a method of

²² Gilles Deleuze and Antonio Negri, “Control and Becoming”, in Gilles, Deleuze, *Negotiations 1972-1990* trans. Martin Joughin, (New York: Columbia University Press 1995; Paris: Les Editions de Minuit 1990), p.174.

²³ Ronald Bogue, *Deleuzian Fabulation and the Scars of History*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2010), p.223.

fictioning the real which collaborates with the reader in resisting the present and summoning a new people and a new Earth. The world will always be more than the stories we tell about it.

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